LOBE

READING

FROM STANDARD AUTHOR

THE

AY OF THE LAST MINSTR

AND

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

SCOTT

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THE

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

AND

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

(FROM THE GLOBE EDITION OF SCOTT'S POETICAL WORKS)

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THE

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

A POEM.

IN SIX CANTOS.

Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied in the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A PECULIAR interest attaches to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," not only as the first disclosure of the poet's powers, but as that, among all his works, which is perhaps most closely identified with his personal career and character. Even if Scott had not himself told us, it would not be difficult to trace the various influences under which he composed this poem. His grandmother, in whose youth the Border raids were still matters of comparatively recent tradition, used to amuse him with many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other Moss-trooping heroes. This prepared his mind for the deep impression which was made on it, when he was about twelve years old, by Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." It was under a large platanus-tree in his aunt's garden at Kelso that he first read them, forgetting even the dinner-hour in his enjoyment of this new treasure. "To read and to remember was in this instance," he says, "the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm."

In the compilation of his own Border Minstrelsy he followed the impulse thus derived; and when, after having for some years dabbled in poetry, he aspired to distinguish himself by something higher than mere translations or occasional verses, his partiality for the Border legends governed his choice of a subject as well as the style of treatment. He hesitated for a while as to the particular story he should illustrate, but all those he thought of belonged to the same class. At one time he contemplated "a Border ballad, in the comic manner," founded on his ancestor's (Sir William Scott, of Harden) marriage with ugly Meg Murray, as the alternative of being hanged by his father-in-law. But finally he decided on "a romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza." Having, at the request of the Countess of Dalkeith, undertaken a ballad about the adventures of a brownie or goblin, called Gilpin Horner, he was discouraged in the attempt by the apparent coldness with which his two friends, Erskine and Cranstoun, listened to the first stanzas, and abandoned the idea till tempted to resume it by learning that, on second thoughts, his critics had formed a more favourable opinion of the effort. He applied himself to the work as an amusement during his enforced leisure, when disabled by the kick of a horse at yeomanry drill on Portobello Sands. As soon as he got into the vein, he dashed it off at the rate of about a canto a week. The goblin page sank into a mere minor feature as the poem grew upon his hands. The metre was borrowed from Coleridge's "Lady Christabel." The beautiful freedom and variety of this metre Scott appreciated all the more, because it enabled him to introduce much of style and phraseology of the old minstrels. The ballad measure in quatrains,

at first naturally suggested itself, was set aside as too hackneyed and wearisome for a composition of any length. Against the measured short line, or octo-syllabic verse, there was the objection of the "fatal facility," to use Scott's own phrase, with which it was written, the temptation it offered to mere verbiage, and its monotonous and namby-pamby effect. Shakespeare had laughed at it as the "butter-woman's rate to market," and the "very false gallop of verses," and Scott felt that his muse demanded a more stirring and varied measure. "Christabel" was not published till 1816; but a year or two before Scott began the "Lay" he had heard Sir John Stoddart recite some parts of it, which made a deep impression on his mind. He saw that Coleridge had remedied all the defects of the octo-syllabic measure, by freeing it from its rigid formality, and dividing it by time instead of syllables; by the beat of four, as Leigh Hunt remarks, into which you might get as many syllables as you could, instead of allotting eight syllables to the poor time, whatever it might have to say, varying it further with alternate rhymes and stanzas, with rests and omissions, precisely analogous to those in music. The old bard himself was an afterthought. He was introduced as a sort of "pitch-pipe" to indicate the tone and character of the composition.

In the poem the reader will find a romantic picture of the Borderers, in the best aspect of their character. Their name, like that of the kindred rovers of the sea, is "linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes." Scott has brought out the solitary virtue—dauntless bravery—into the foreground, and has thrown the crimes into the shade. Here we may offer some prosaic observations on their real character. At first national feuds lent a justification to the Border raids. It was in the spirit of patriotism that the men on each side of the Cheviots harried one another's homes, and drove off one another's cattle. The instinct of hostility survived long after the two countries were at peace, and was quickened by the love of plunder. At the period of the following tale, they had degenerated into mere robbers, whom the rulers on both sides of the Border alike denounced. The best that can be said for them is that they had inherited the traditions of rapine which they sought to perpetuate; that what philosophers now call the doctrine of "continuity" was responsible for much of their wild temper; and that the savage habits which had been transmitted through generations were not readily uprooted:—

> "There never was a time on the March partes,
> Sen the Douglas and the Percy met,
> But yt was marvell yt the redde blude roune not
> As the rane does in the street."

Nursed with such a lullaby, it seemed to these wild Borderers only a law of nature that Scots and English should prey upon each other, and this ferocious spirit soon expanded into an impartial appetite for plunder, and general antagonism to society. And so it came about that a Scott learned to have as little compunction in "lighting to bed" a Kerr as a Græme. They had their own domestic raids and blood-feuds or disputes, as over the Border. It was, in truth, a restless, cruel, wild-beast kind of existence, that called forth all the worst passions, and could have been bearable only through a brutish insensibility and indifference to danger. They carried their life in their hands, and none could tell whether to a week's end he could call his kine his own. "They are like to Job," says Fuller, quaintly, "not in piety and patience, but in sudden plenty and poverty; sometimes having flocks and herds in the morning, none at night, and perchance many again next day." It was with some surprise, in the midst of vexation, that Watt Tinlinn reflected that his little lonely tower had not been

burned for a year and more; and the old song tells the common experience for which every borderer had to be prepared:—

> "Last night I saw a sorry sight—
> Nought left me o' four-and-twenty guide ousen and kye;
> My weel-ridden gelding, and a white grey,
> But a toom byre and a wide,
> And the twelve nogs on ilka side.
> Fy, lads! shout a' a' a' a' a'
> My gear's a' gane."

Religion, of course, in any true sense of the term, was hardly to be looked for in such a class. "They come to church," says Fuller, "as seldom as the 29th of February comes into the calendar." Yet they were not without their superstitions; and, however wanting in real piety, could patter an Ave Maria and finger their beads as they rode to a plundering foray. Their sense of honour could hardly have been very strong, and was certainly exceptional. But they had, at least, a sense of the sacredness of hospitality, and the protection which a host owes to his guest. Even the author of the "Worthies" owns that "indeed, if they promise safely to conduct a traveller, they will perform it with the fidelity of a Turkish Janizary; otherwise, woe be to him that falleth into their quarters." "They are," he adds, "a nest of hornets; strike one, and stir all of them about your ears. . . . Yet these Moss-troopers, if possibly they could procure the pardon for a condemned person of their company, would advance great sums out of their common stock, who, in such a case, cast in their lots among themselves; and all have one purse." So that, in spite of their domestic differences, there was a sort of union amongst them. The term Moss-troopers is evidently derived from the mosses among which they lived, and the companies in which they went about harrying. It was owing mainly to the vigorous measures of Belted Will, Earl of Carlisle, that the raiders were put down. The last public mention of Moss-troopers occurs during the civil wars of the 17th century, when many ordinances of Parliament were directed against them.

The region in which the scene of the poem is laid was as familiar and dear to Scott as the legends with which it is associated. His first consciousness of existence dated, as he himself has told us, from Sandy Knowe. In early manhood a "raid" into Liddesdale was the favourite object of a vacation ramble. At Ashestiel he spent the first happy years of wedlock: in Abbotsford he sought to realize one of the great ambitions of his life; and Dryburgh incloses his remains. The Border Union Railway now traverses the district from Carlisle to Hawick, and modern cultivation has somewhat softened and enriched the aspect of the landscape. The old peels and Border strongholds have been gradually crumbling away. Hawick, Selkirk, and Galashiels have risen into populous and flourishing towns, the seats of an important industry. Agriculture, though still chiefly pastoral, has encroached on many a hill-side, bogs have been drained, and coal-fields opened up. The mockery of the line—

> "Rich was the soil had purple heath been grain,"

has lost most of its force, and the farmers of Liddesdale can now give a better account of their lands than the gudeman of Charlieshope—"There's mair hares than sheep on my farm; and for the moor-fowl and the grey-fowl, they lie as thick as doos in a dooket." But in Scott's time the country was much the same as in the days of the Moss-troopers. The people had outlived the old Border traditions of raids and robberies, yet in the seclusion of their valleys they preserved many of the rough reckless manners of their ancestors. Scott has painted them, in "Guy Mannering," much as they lived under his own eye

The wildness of the region, even at the end of the last century, may be gathered from the incidents of one of the poet's raids. His gig was the first wheeled carriage that had ever been seen in Liddesdale. There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley, which was accessible only through a succession of tremendous morasses. "In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves." Scott used to boast of being sheriff of the "cairn and the scaur," and that he had strolled through the wild glens of Liddesdale "so often and so long, that he might say he had a home in every farmhouse."

The scenery of the Scottish borderland can lay claim to little grandeur. The hills are too bare to be beautiful, and too low to be very impressive. Still the wide tracts of black moss, the grey swells of moor rising into brown, round-backed hills, with here and there a stately cliff of sterner aspect, and the green pastures of the quiet glens, are not without their charm, in spite of the general bare and treeless character of the landscape, which is at first apt to disappoint the visitor from the South. Washington Irving spoke of this disappointment to his host at Abbotsford. "Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave. 'It may be pertinacity,' he said at length; 'but to my eye, these grey hills and all this wild Border country have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die!*' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech." That Scott was quite sensible to the sort of melancholy awe inspired by some of the more savage parts of the country is shown (if other proof were not abundant in his poems and novels) in a passage in one of his letters. Speaking of the view from the top of Minchmoor, he says:—"I assure you I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness when looking around the naked towering ridges of desolate barrenness which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain, the patches of cultivation being hidden in the little glens, or only appearing to make one feel how feeble and ineffectual man has been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown and gifted author of 'Albonia' places the superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a 'chase, the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the wild halloos of the huntsmen, and the

"'Hoof thick beating on the hollow hill.'

I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in this place." As far as his own estate was concerned, he did much by his plantations to cover the nakedness of the land, and his precept and example also helped to make planting fashionable among his neighbours.

Of Scott's power of word-painting there is, no doubt, more abundant and striking evidence in his later poems; but the descriptions of natural scenery in the "Lay" are not only very effective, but illustrate that peculiar perception of colour rather than form which has been pointed out in the very suggestive criticism of Mr. Ruskin in the "Modern Painters." Analysing the description of Edinburgh, in "Marmion," he shows there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour in the "Observe," he says, "the only hints at form given throughout are in

the somewhat vague words, 'ridgy, massy, close, and high,' the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery in its most tangible form of smoke. But the *colours* are all definite: note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green and gold—in a noble chord throughout." Elsewhere Mr. Ruskin says, "In consequence of his unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably greater than any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about their own affairs. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. 'I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing: but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great are they, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent thoughtless sake!'"

Without attempting any detailed topographical illustration of the poem, it may be worth while to notice some of the spots of chief interest which are referred to. Newark Castle, where the old minstrel is supposed to chant his tale before the duchess, stands in ruins in its "birchen bower" on the right bank of the Yarrow—a large square tower, dismantled and unroofed, with crumbling outer wall and turrets. It was built by James II. for a hunting seat, afterwards belonged to the outlaw Murray, and has long been a possession, as it still is, of the house of Buccleuch. Newark Castle, where the imaginary minstrel poured forth his song, is included within the grounds of Bowhill, the favourite seat of another fair duchess, at whose request, when Countess of Dalkeith, Scott commenced the poem which developed into the Lay. He accordingly, says Lockhart, "shadows out his own beautiful friend in the person of her lord's ancestor, the last of the original stock of that great house; himself, the favoured inmate of Bowhill, introduced certainly to the familiarity of that circle by his devotion to the poetry of a by-past age, in that of an aged minstrel seeking shelter at the gate of Newark." This is the point of many arch allusions in the poem. There is also a personal interest in the closing lines, which refer, it is believed, to the day-dream of Ashestiel—the purchase of a modest mountain farm in that neighbourhood: "a hundred acres, two spare bed-rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will on a pinch have a couch-bed"—a dream which afterwards grew into the ambitious scheme of Abbotsford. Lockhart deems it, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of Scott's life that the original vision was not realized; but "the success of the poem itself 'changed the spirit of his dream.'" Ashestiel, where the Lay was partly written, lies at the foot of Minchmoor, on the right bank of the Tweed.

Branksome Tower still overlooks the Langholm Road, on the left bank of the Teviot, between two and three miles above Hawick. Various alterations have gradually reduced the dimensions of the building, and one square tower of massive thickness is the only part of the original structure which now remains. In the rest of the edifice the castellated style has been abandoned, and the old stronghold presents, with the exception of the towers referred to, the appearance of a handsome modern mansion. The extent of the old castle can still, however, be traced by some vestiges of its foundation. Its situation on a steep bank, surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, naturally added to its strength. The present hunting seat of the Duke of Buccleuch in this quarter is at Langholm Lodge. Branksome is celebrated in a song of Alan Ramsay's—

"As I cam' in by Teviot side,"

as well as in the Lay. About half a mile nearer Hawick, on the other bank of the river from Branksome, is the peel of Goldielands, in tolerably good preservation.

Harden Castle, another relic of the same period, and the cradle of the po[illegible] ancestry, stands not far off on the bank of Borthwick Water, which here [illegible]

the Teviot. It takes its name from the number of hares which used to frequent the place (Harden—the ravine of hares), and is a deep, dark, narrow glen, threaded by a little mountain streamlet. The castle is perched on the top of the steep bank, and Leyden (Scott's friend), in one of his poems, thus describes the situation :—

> "Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
> Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
> Through slaty hills, whose sides are shogged with thorn,
> Where springs in scattered tufts the dark-green corn,
> Towers wood-girt Harden far above the vale,
> And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail."

The family of Harden is a cadet branch of the house of Buccleuch, and the heraldic allusion in the poem is to the fact that the Scotts of Harden bear their arms upon the field, while the Scotts of Buccleuch exhibit them on the bend dexter, which they adopted when the estate of Murdiestone came by marriage. One of the most famous of the Scotts of Harden was one Walter, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary. He was a great freebooter, and used to bring his spoil to the castle on the cliff. His wife was Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow (one of the Scotts of Dryhope), and it is of her the well-known story is told of the production of a pair of clean spurs at dinner-time, in a covered dish, as a hint of the want of provisions, and of the way to get them. Notwithstanding his marauding life Walter seems to have prospered. He had a large estate, which was divided among his five sons. A number of the most popular of the Border songs are attributed by tradition to an infant whom he carried off in a raid, and whom his kind-hearted wife cherished as one of her own children. As illustrative of the temper of this rough old chief, Sir Walter tells a characteristic anecdote in one of the notes of the Minstrelsy. "Upon one occasion, when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow. 'Harden's cow!' echoed the affronted chief; 'is it come to that pass? By my faith, they shall soon say Harden's kye' (cows). Accordingly he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with *a bow of kye and a lassen'd* (brindled) *bull.* On his return with this gallant prey he passed a very large haystack. It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle; but, as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial, 'By my saul, had ye but four feet, ye should not stand lang there!' In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot.*" It was Auld Wat's eldest son, Sir William Scott, who was saved from being hanged for participation in a foray on the lands of Sir Gibson Murray, of Elibank, by the captor's prudent wife suggesting that it was a pity to sacrifice a young man of good estate when they might marry him to one of their three daughters, a proposal to which it did not, under the circumstances, require much argument to reconcile young Harden. Beardie (so called from the long beard he wore in mourning for the execution of Charles I.), the poet's great-grandfather, was the grandson of Sir William Scott.

Hawick spreads itself on both sides of the Slitterick, a tributary of the Teviot, into which it falls just below the town. Having survived repeated burnings during the heat of Border warfare, part of the Tower-inn represents, it is said, the only building which was not consumed in the great blaze of 1570. *Hawick is now at the* head of the "tweed" manufactories of Scotland. It has a *rapidly growing population, already* over 8,000, and is continually being enriched *with new mills. Minto Castle, the* seat of the Earl of Minto—open daily except —*perched on a height, between* Hawick and Selkirk, commands a fine

view, and is noted for its magnificent library. Minto Crags, close at hand, are a romantic series of cliffs rising suddenly above the Vale of Teviot. A small platform on a projecting crag is known as Barnhill's Bed, from a famous outlaw and robber, who lived in a strong tower beneath the rocks, of which there are some vestiges, as well as of another old peel on the summit of the heights. Of Melrose a sufficient account is given in the poem and notes. Ruskin is very angry with Scott, because, reverencing it as he did, "he yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fire-place." Founded in 1136, by David I. (whose liberality in endowing churches wrung from his successor the moan that he was "a sore saint for the crown"), the abbey was finished ten years later, and was peopled with monks from Yorkshire, who, although of the reformed order, called Cistercians—the first of the class seen north of the Tweed—appear soon to have degenerated into the traditional monkish sensuality, if we may trust the jeering verse—

> "The monks of Melrose made gude kail
> On Fridays when they fasted,
> Nor wanted they gude beef and ale,
> As long 's their neighbours' lasted."

The abbey was destroyed by the English in 1322, rebuilt by Robert Bruce, cruelly defaced at the Reformation, but still remains one of the noblest and most interesting specimens of Gothic sculpture and architecture in Scotland. The stone of which it is built, though exposed to the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. The Abbey is the theme of a poem by Arthur Hallam, who dwells especially on its resistance to decay, and covets a similar tardy waning, till looking on the serene, thoughtful figure of the bard of Abbotsford, he

> ——"Knew that aweless intellect
> Hath power upon the ways of fate,
> And works through time and space uncheck'd.
> That minstrel of old chivalry,
> In the cold grave must come to lie,
> But his transmitted thoughts have part
> In the collective mind, and never shall depart."

Although Abbotsford has a greater attachment for the traveller than any other spot in the district—not even, perhaps, excepting Melrose itself—it is apt to be a disappointment. It is a very indifferent building in an architectural point of view; defective in taste and poor in effect. It wants elevation, and, above all, repose; the eye is vexed by the composed medley of style, and by the restless pretentious effect to cram a vast deal into a limited space. Most of the pictures help to encourage an exaggerated idea of the imposing aspect of the mansion, and when the stranger sees the reality it falls far short of his expectations. For its own sake it would not be worth the while of turning out of one's road to look at it. To the associations connected with it alone, is due the interest of the place. It should be visited in the spirit of a pilgrimage, and to those who know the sad, romantic story of its creation and consequences, there is a touching interest in every relic and every chamber. How the dreams about the cottage expanded into the ambition of a castle is well known, as well as its disastrous end; the crushing load of debt, the desperate struggle to redeem it, the over-strained and shattered mind. Between the Clarty Hole when Scott first furnished it—"the naked moor, a few turnip-fields painfully reclaimed from it, a Scotch cottage and farm-yard, and some Scotch firs"—and the richly wooded domain, with its turreted chateau, into which it was gradually converted, there was a wide contrast. Whatever may be thoug of the house, the surrounding plantations were a noble work, and justify the pr

enthusiasm for the work. A public road divides the mansion and *pleasaunce* from the main body of the park and wood. The house stands near the edge of the wooded bank, sloping down towards the Tweed. A pious pride has been taken in preserving the whole building as it was in Scott's time. The armour and weapons of all kinds are all in their old array; the same pictures hang on the walls; the books are ranged in the order familiar to the master's hand; and even the lounging-coat, the hat, walking-shoes, and staff are ready in their places. Passing through a porch, you enter the hall, which, with its stained glass, trophies of armour, blazonry of Border heroes, "who keepit the marchys of Scotland in the auld time for the kinge," and lozenge pavement of black and white marble, is the finest part of the house. A narrow, low-arched room, running quite across the building, and filled with more armour and other curiosities, leads to the drawing-room on one side, and the dining-room on the other. The latter is a handsome chamber, with a low, richly-carved roof of dark oak, spacious bow-window, and numerous valuable and interesting pictures, such as the head of Mary Queen of Scots in a charger, painted by Amias Cawood the day after her decapitation; portraits of old "Beardie," Lucy Walters, the Duchess of Buccleuch, to whom the Minstrel is supposed to chant his Lay, &c. The drawing-room is panelled with cedar, and fitted with antique ebony furniture, quaint, richly carved cabinets and precious china ware. In a pleasant breakfast-room, overlooking the river, there are some good pictures by Turner, Thomson of Duddingstone, and others. The library is the largest room of the house. Some 70,000 vols. crowd its shelves. From this opens Sir Walter's private study—a snug little chamber, with no furniture, except a small writing-table, a plain arm-chair, covered with black leather, and another smaller chair—clearly indicating it as a place for work, not company. There are a few books on each side of the fire-place, and a sort of supplemental library in a gallery which runs round three sides of the room. In a closet are preserved, under a glass case, the clothes Sir Walter wore just before his death—a broad-skirted green coat, with large buttons, plaid trousers, heavy shoes, broad-brimmed hat, and stout walking-stick. The relics set one thinking of the old man's last days in the house of which he was so proud, the kindly placid figure wheeled about, with all the dogs round him, in a chair, up and down the hall and library, saying, "Ah, I've seen much, but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more." Much of the decoration of the house is of ancient design, some borrowed from Melrose, some from Dumfermline, Linlithgow, and Roslin. Even portions of various old edifices are worked into the building. Within the estate is the scene of the last great clan battle of the Borders, that fought in 1526 between the Earls of Angus and Home, backed the former by the Kerrs, and the other by Buccleuch. Mr. Hope Scott, Q.C. who married Scott's granddaughter, has inherited the property.

The success of the Lay was beyond the most sanguine expectations of Scott's most enthusiastic admirers. In the preface of 1830, he himself estimated the sale at upwards of 30,000 copies; but Lockhart tells us that this was an under-estimate, and that in twenty-five years no fewer than 44,000 copies had been disposed of—an event with few parallels in the history of British poetry. The first edition, a magnificent quarto, of which 750 copies were printed, was quickly exhausted; eleven octavo editions, a small quarto, and a foolscap edition followed in rapid succession.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh:
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.

The Duchess * mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, † dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, ‡ rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,

* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

‡ Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied:
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'T was thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower.*
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest-race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of metal true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carv'd at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through
The helmet barr'd.

* See "NOTES TO THE 'LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL'" at end.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying:
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying:
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.—
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell,
How Lord Walter fell!
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin *
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's† deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair,
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,

* *Edinburgh.*
† *The war-cry or gathering word of a Border clan.*

Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learned the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame,
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sp'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the grey warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door:
Then, from amid the armed train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"*Sir William of Deloraine*, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep,
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"—

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done.
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,*
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel† of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;

* *Barbican*, the defence of an outer gate feudal castle.
† *Peel*, a Border tower.

And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark:—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.*

XXVII.

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand,
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded* from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;†
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day,
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran,
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds‡ were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell;

* *An ancient Roman road, crossing through of Roxburghshire.*

* *Barded*, or barbed,—applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

† An ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished.

‡ *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic Church.

Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they longed the rest to hear,
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day,
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there:
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair;
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long,
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"—
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And strait the wicket open'd wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,*
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."—
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then daring Warrior, follow me!"

* *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."—

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy,
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbells* were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourish'd around,
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Show'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
(A Scottish monarch slept below;)

* *Corbells*, the projections from which the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face or mask.

Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
A Wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone.
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed,
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look:
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast,"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior! now the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night.
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pr

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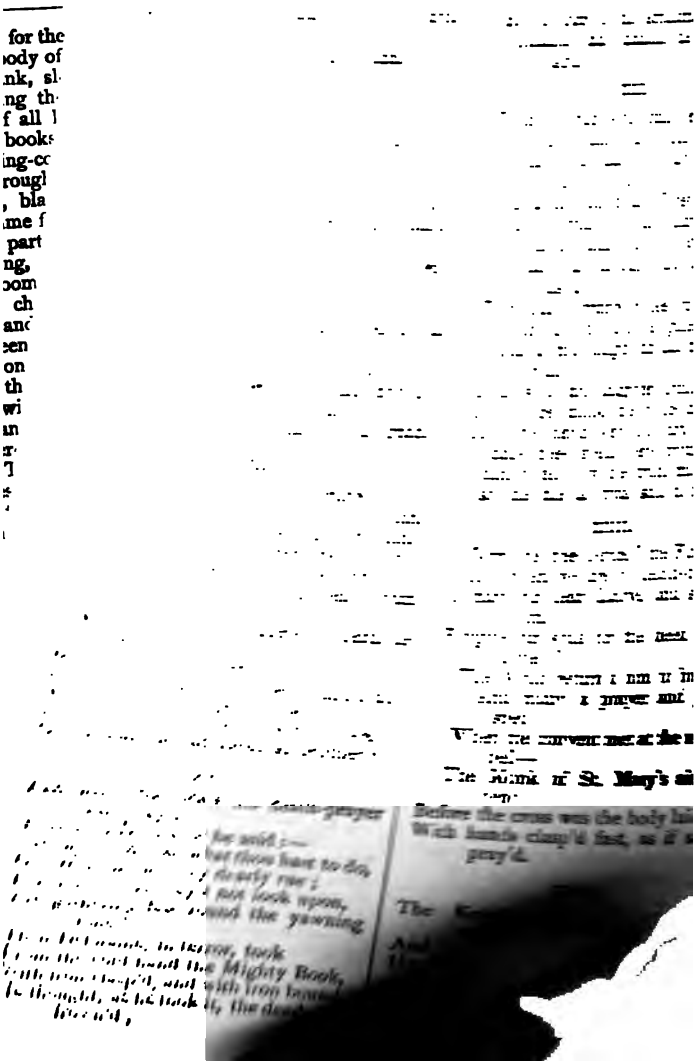

d his joints, with nerves of iron twin'd,
ook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
ll fain was he when the dawn of day
gan to brighten Cheviot grey ,
e joy'd to see the cheerful light.
id he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

he sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey.
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's side ;
nd soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot-tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows ;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie ;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie ;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair ;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As she rouses him up from his lair ;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown ?

XXVII.

The Ladye steps in doubt
Lest her watchful

st,

ck,
ng broke,
d horse.
his course ;
d his brain—
the plain.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trode.
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid:
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd *a band*
Of the best that would ride at her command:
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly:
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel-grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove: *
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,

* Wood-pigeon.

The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I, to the dearest theme
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the Page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay;
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest; *
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurr'd his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale:
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior, saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

* The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto, *Thou shalt want ere I want.*

VII.

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day."

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin-Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride:
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour * might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling † seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,*
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;

* *Magical delusion.* † *A shepherd's hut.*

* Magic.

The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

XIV.

Full sore amaz'd at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face,
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire,
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scantly to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleu

And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"—

XX.

"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order;
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border,
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,*
And wofully scorch'd the hackbuteer.†
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd,
That the young Baron was possess'd!

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.

* *Bandelier, belt for carrying ammunition.*
† *Hackbuteer, musketeer.*

Much she wonder'd to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretch'd along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toil'd; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
Touch'd a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
Oh! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:—
"On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire:
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise."

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty rout,
The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's * slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky
All flaring and uneven;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,†
Haunted by the lonely earn;‡
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne § them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal:
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower.

* Need-fire, beacon.
† Tarn, a mountain lake.
‡ Earn, a Scottish eagle.
§ Bowne, make ready

Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black mail;*
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal.
To hide the tear, that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seiz'd the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower;

* *Protection money exacted by freebooters.*

And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."*

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,†
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf ‡ was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely formed, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A Border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seemed newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—
"Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men,
Who have long lain at Askerten:
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burned my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turned at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

* *An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.*
† *The broken ground in a bog.* ‡ Bondsman.

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

VIII.

From fair St Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims,
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss-trooper came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England lo

His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow:
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshaw-hill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart, and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege Lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came
Homage and seignory to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot * he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
—"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale *muir;*
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

* *The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in name of heriot, or Herezeld.*

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,
Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."—

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun-deer started at fair Craik-cross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances appear;

And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-
linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances
broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had
said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and
through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with
the rill,
The Galliard's Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison
clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed
man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to
the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white
horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw
came,
And warriors more than I may name,
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-
swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen.
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and
spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's
friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his
weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."—

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner
wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should ere be son of
mine!"—

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure chang'd, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost!
lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and
through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and
wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching south
foe.

Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord:
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er,
And morsing-horns* and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

* *Powder-flasks*

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;
Falcon and culver,* on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armour frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reek'd, like a witch's cauldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And high, curvetting slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peelèd willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.†

* Ancient pieces of artillery.

† A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.

When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."—

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go."—
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.*
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain.

* An asylum for outlaws.

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried* the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison.†
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.

* Plundered. † Note of assaul

Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake* dirge,
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"St Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betray'd?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;†
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
The mustering of coming foe."—

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he stay'd,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride:
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;

* *Lyke-wake, the watching a corpse previous to interment.*

† *Weapon-schaw, the military array of a*

And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed,
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on Poet's ear:
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled, then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,

And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine,
And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day,
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,* now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithsome signs of wassel gay
Decay'd not with the dying day:
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save, where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;

* A sort of knife, or poniard.

For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port* aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and twixt Thirlestaine:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;

* A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

'et not long the strife—for, lo!
f, the Knight of Deloraine,
as it seem'd and free from pain,
mour sheath'd from top to toe,
'd, and craved the combat due.
me her charm successful knew,
e fierce chiefs their claims with-
lrew.

XVI.

or the lists they sought the plain,
tely Ladye's silken rein
oble Howard hold;
d by her side he walk'd,
uch, in courteous phrase, they
alk'd
ats of arms of old.
is garb—his Flemish ruff
r his doublet, shaped of buff,
satin slash'd and lined;
his boot, and gold his spur,
ak was all of Poland fur,
ose with silver twined;
boa blade, by Marchmen felt,
a broad and studded belt;
in rude phrase, the Borderers
still
oble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Lord Howard and the Dame,
argaret on her palfrey came,
se foot-cloth swept the ground:
was her wimple, and her veil,
r loose locks a chaplet pale
hitest roses bound;
dly Angus, by her side,
tesy to cheer her tried;
t his aid, her hand in vain
ove to guide her broider'd rein.
m'd, she shudder'd at the sight
iors met for mortal fight;
se of terror, all unguess'd,
ttering in her gentle breast,
in their chairs of crimson placed,
me and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

the field, the young Buccleuch,
lish knight led forth to view;
ued the boy his present plight,
he long'd to see the fight.

Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:—

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!"

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat:
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"—

LORD HOME.

—"God defend the right!"—
Then Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped:—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran:
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
hard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the gra
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surpris
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around
As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with spe
Vaulted each marshal from his steed
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and wo
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought
won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blo
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were m
What Douglas, Home, and How said—
—For Howard was a generous fo
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Tev Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy
Then broke her silence stern and stil
"Not you, but Fate, has vanqu me;

Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramaye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,*
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX.

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
I'ill ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear!
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

* The spectral apparition of a living pers

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim:
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek;*
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,

* This and the three following lines form the inscription on the monument to Scott in the market-place of Selkirk.

But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell;
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art,
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair; and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrade, cold, and drench'd in blood,

His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride."—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one:
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierc'd him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
'board and flagons overturn'd.
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lo
lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græn
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so w
Within the Land Debateable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made th
broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wa
And she would marry a Scottish knig
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle w
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of a

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carli
wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and l
Where the sun shines fair on Carli
wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would
A Scottish knight the lord of all.

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wa
When dead, in her true love's arms, s
fell,
For Love was still the lord of a

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!
And then he took the cross divine,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And died for her sake in Palestine;
So Love was still the lord of all.
Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renown'd in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might:
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find:—
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.—
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St Clair;
St Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale;

And many a Runic column high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch* and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But *that my ladye-mother* there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle!

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darkened hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.

* *Inch*, isle.

A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found! found! found!

XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine:
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
Was fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it matter'd not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale;
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take,
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
Some to St Modan made their vows,
Some to St Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell:
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence, and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song—
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
While the pealing organ rung;
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?
When, shriveling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!
Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Wav'd the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE:

A POEM.

IN SIX CANTOS.

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,

&c. &c. &c

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

ARGUMENT.

The Scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

THREE years separated Scott's second poetical venture from his first; but the "Lady of the Lake" followed "Marmion" after an interval of little more than a couple of years. Scott has told us himself the alarm of his aunt,* when she heard that he was meditating another appeal to public favour, lest he should in any way injure the great popularity he had already achieved, or, in her own words, lest standing so high he got a severe fall if he attempted to climb higher. "And a favourite," she added, sententiously, "will not be permitted to stumble with impunity." But Scott, without being guilty of any overweening self-confidence, had taken the measure of his powers, and felt that he might safely make the effort. Besides, he conceived that he held his distinguished position as the most successful poet of the day, on much the same condition as the champion of the prize-ring holds the belt —that of being always ready to show proofs of his skill. The result fully justified his resolution. Measured even by the standard of the "Minstrel" and "Marmion," the "Lady of the Lake" possessed merits of its own, which raised his reputation still higher. Jeffrey's prediction has been perfectly fulfilled, that the "Lady of the Lake" would be "oftener read hereafter than either of the former;" and it is generally acknowledged to be, in Lockhart's words, "the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems."

Scott's acquaintance with the Highlands dated from his boyhood. He had visited them before his sixteenth year, and repeatedly returned thither. His first introduction to the scenery of the "Lady of the Lake" was curious enough. He entered it, "riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear-guard, and loaded arms." He was then a writer's apprentice, or, in English phrase, an attorney's clerk, and had been despatched by his father to enforce the execution of a legal instrument against some Maclarens, refractory tenants of Stewart of Appin. The armed force with which he was attended, consisting of a serjeant and six men from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling Castle, proved unnecessary, for no resistance was offered. The Maclarens had decamped, and Scott afterwards learned that they went to America. That such an escort should have been deemed needful, however, gives one an idea of what the Highlands and the inhabitants were even at a time so close upon our own day. In the course of his successive excursions to the Highlands, Scott made himself thoroughly acquainted with their recesses. He not only became familiar with the people, but, as one of his friends said, even the goats might have claimed him as an old friend. With characteristic conscientiousness, however, when he conceived the idea of the "Lady of the Lake," he did not trust to the impressions thus acquired to guide him in the descriptions of scenery, which form one of the chief charms of the poem, and render it, even now, one of the most minute and faithful hand-books to the region in which the drama of Ellen and the Knight of Snowdoun is enacted. He made a special *tour, in order* to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of the story

* Miss Christian Rutherford, his mother's sister.

and a hot gallop from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle measured the time which was allotted to King James for his flight after the combat with Roderick Dhu. This "fiery progress" was otherwise well known to him. Its principal land-marks were so many hospitable mansions where he had been a welcome and grateful guest—Blairdrummond, the residence of Lord Kaimes; Ochtertyre, that of John Ramsay, the antiquary; and Kier, the seat of the Stirling family (now represented by Sir William Maxwell, M.P.). The usual route of the tourist reverses that of FitzJames's desperate ride. Starting from "grey Stirling, with her towers and town," he leaves behind him the Abbey Craig, the site of the Wallace monument, and crosses the Forth and the Allan. The seats above mentioned are all in this neighbourhood, while further on are Doune, with its ruined castle, once the residence of the Duke of Albany, and afterwards of Queen Mary, and Deanstown, where there are now extensive cotton-mills. Skirting the Teith, the traveller sees, on the north bank, Lanrick Castle, formerly the seat of the chieftain of Clan-Gregor (Sir Evan Murray), and soon reaches Callander, which is now the favourite head-quarters of those who wish to make excursions into the region which Scott rendered at once famous and fashionable. Benledi (2,882 feet) rises on the north; Ben-a'an (1800) is further west, and Benvenue (2,386) appears to the south. At the eastern extremity of Loch Vennachar, where it contracts into the river Teith, is Coilantogle, the scene of the fight between King James and Rhoderick Dhu. This was the limit of the chieftain's passport, "Clan-Alpine's outmost guard," and here, on terms of equality, he challenged the mysterious stranger.

> "The Chief in silence strode before,
> And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
> Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
> From Vennachar in silver breaks,
> Sweeps through the plain and ceaseless mines
> On Bochastle the mouldering lines
> Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
> Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd."

The last lines refer to the supposed traces of Roman occupation in the mounds on the haugh of Callander, and also near the railway station, which bear the name of the Roman Camp. It is, however, still matter of controversy whether these embankments are of human or of natural origin. At the other end of Loch Vennachar, which is five miles long, is the muster-place of Clan Alpine—Lanrick Mead. The sudden revelation of the ambuscade is supposed to take place a little farther to the westward, when

> "Instant through copse and heath arose
> Bonnets and spears, and bended bows;
> On right, on left, above, below,
> Sprung up at once the lurking foe."

Within a mile "Duncraggan's huts" appear, where Malise surrenders the fiery cross to the young Angus, by the side of his father's bier, while the wail of the coronach for the dead is mingled with lamentations for the orphan's danger.* About a mile up Glenfinlas (once a royal deer forest, and still inhabited almost exclusively by Stewarts), which here opens on the right, is the waterfall, which pours down

> "— that huge cliff, whose ample verge
> Tradition calls the hero's targe,"

* *St. Bride's Chapel, where Angus gives up the cross to Norman, the bridegroom, stands by the side of the Teith, near Loch Lubnaig, while the rest of the course was by Loch Voil, Loch Doine, the source of Balvaig, and thence southwards down Strath-Gartney.*

where an outlaw is reported to have found shelter, and where the white bull was slain from which the chieftain sought an augury. The Brig of Turk, said to take its name from a ferocious boar which long haunted the spot, comes next; and then the road which gives access to the Trosachs, skirts the north shore of Loch Achray (Lake of the Laurel Field), "between the precipice and brake."

Although the name "Trosachs" is often loosely applied to the whole region comprising Loch Katrine and the adjoining lakes, it belongs, strictly speaking, only to the part between Loch Achray and Loch Katrine.

The Trosachs, or Bristled Territory, as the word signifies in Gaelic, now form the entrance to one of the chief passes of the Grampians; but formerly it was a barrier to the progress of all, save the most alert and enterprising travellers. Until a comparatively recent time a ladder of branches and roots of trees, suspended over a steep crag, afforded the only means of traversing the defile.

> No pathway met the wanderer's view,
> Unless he climbed with footing nice
> A far projecting precipice;
> The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
> The hazel saplings lent their aid."

It is an instance of the complete manner in which Scott has identified himself with this district, that the defile at the end of the Trosachs is known as Bealach-an-Duine (so called from a skirmish between the Highlanders and a party of Cromwell's troops, in which one of the latter was killed), although the real pass of that name is at some distance to the east, on the old road. It was in the opening gorge of the Trosachs that Fitzjames's "gallant grey" sank exhausted; and the guides point out this and the spots where the other incidents of the poem are represented as having occurred with as careful an identification as if they had been actually historic localities. The savage tumultuous wildness of the Trosachs is rendered more striking by, and in turn enhances, the rich loveliness of Loch Katrine, which suddenly appears in sight at a turn in the road. At the eastern end of the lake a projecting spit of land forms

> "A narrow inlet still and deep,
> Affording scarce such breadth of brim
> As served the wild-duck's brood to swim."

Ellen's Isle, also, blocks the prospect. It is only by a rude scramble over the rocks in the direction of the old road that the point can be reached from which Fitzjames beheld the lake and its islets. Some lower eminences afford a partial view, but it is usually from the little steamer which plies during the season that the magnificent scene is disclosed to the tourist in its full extent. The lake measures about ten miles in length, and two in average breadth, and is of a winding serpentine form. Towards the west its shores are rocky and precipitous, and each side is clothed with dense copse-wood. The silver strand where the royal wanderer first sees Ellen, lies to the left of the road—

> "A beach of pebbles bright as snow."

The island, with its tangled screen, lies in front, and a little lodge, answering to the description in the poem, was some years back to be found there. It was accidentally burned, however, and the hidden bower, like the heroine who lived there, must now be supplied by the imagination. In other respects Scott's picture is fully realized, nor do the guides forget to call forth the echo which answered Fitzjames's bugle. There are other islands besides this, and on one of them are the ruins of the Castle of Macgregor. On the south side of the lake, opposite to Ellen's Isle, is Coir-nan-Uriskan, or Goblin's Cave, where Douglas hid hims

with his daughter, a vast circular hollow in the mountain, some few yards in diameter at the top, which gradually narrows towards the bottom. It is enclosed on all sides by steep cliffs, while brushwood and boulders hide the mouth of the cavern. The Urisks, from whom the place derives its name, were shaggy imps of the Brownie kind.

The Pass of Cattle, or Bealach-nam-bo (so called from the herds which the cattle-lifters used to drive this way), which may be reached either through an opening in the cave or by another path, is higher up. Scott declared this to be "the most sublime piece of scenery that the imagination can conceive;" and although much of its imposing effect has departed since the axe was laid to the overhanging timber on Benvenue, it has still a wild grandeur which, in some degree, justifies the eulogium.

When Scott first spoke of taking Rokeby as the scene of a poem, his friend Morritt jocularly declared that he should at once raise the rent of an inn on his estate as some compensation for the rush of tourists which might be expected to follow the publication of the poem. The effect of the "Lady of the Lake" in this respect was certainly such as to justify the anticipation. The poem happened to appear in May, and before July the Trosachs had been invaded by a horde of pleasure-travellers. Crowds started for Loch Katrine. The little inns scattered at intervals along the high roads were filled to overflowing; and numerous cottages were turned into taverns. Shepherds and gillies suddenly found themselves able to make what they deemed splendid fortunes, by acting as guides to visitors who wished to compare the realities of nature with the poetical descriptions which had so enchanted them. It is stated as a fact that from the year in which the "Lady of the Lake" was published, the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and even continued to do so regularly for some time afterwards, as successive editions of the poem appeared, and as the circle of readers grew wider. The seclusion of the Lower Highlands was at an end. Before Scott made the region fashionable, the Trosachs were only a vague name to most of the townspeople of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Here and there a sportsman in search of grouse and capercailzie, or a man of business on some chance errand, ventured among those wilds; but the ordinary holiday-tourist never dreamed of turning his steps in that direction. But no sooner did the poem appear than not only Scots, but English, thronged to the Trosachs, which indeed quickly became more familiar to the latter, notwithstanding the long distance and tedious journey, than the Welsh hills which were comparatively close at hand. Such an influx of visitors, most of them wealthy, and willing to pay well for the comforts and luxuries to which they were accustomed at home, could not fail to have a marked effect on the condition of the natives. Their primitive simplicity, as well as perhaps in some cases their primitive honesty, has departed, but contact with strangers has quickened their intelligence, and widened their ideas, as well as filled their pockets. The money thus brought into the country has been applied, not only to improving the accommodation for travellers, but to the development of various industries, so that the route of the tourist may now for the most part be traced not merely by the natural beauties through which it passes, but by a thriving and busy population.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

The Chase.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
  On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
  Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
  O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
  Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
  Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
  Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
  Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bow'd;
  For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
  That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce my skill command
  Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
  And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
  The wizard note has not been touch'd in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,

That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awaken'd mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,
Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices join'd the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cower'd the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stay'd perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain side,
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey,
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunn'd to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strain'd full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart bar'd the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;

For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew;—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they press'd,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answer'd with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seem'd an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd.

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced.

The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd, *
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue †
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;

* Loch Katrine is conjectured to have taken its name from the Catterins or Ketterins, a wild band of robbers who prowled about its shores to the terror of all wayfarers.

† Benvenue in Gaelic signifies Little mountain: and the implied comparison in respect of height relates to Benledi and Benlomond.

A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed,
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting place;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
I am alone;—my bugle strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The list'ner held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood,* her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O! need I tell that passion's name!

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came,—
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name
Less resolutely utter'd fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarm'd, with hasty oar,
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gain'd between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

* See Note on Canto III., stanza 5, p. 124

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
her light skiff approach'd the side,—
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,—
A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deem'd it was my father's horn,
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—"Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with smile suppress'd and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasp'd an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect, and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger view'd the shore around;
'Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show'd
A clambering unsuspected road,

That winded through the tangled screen,
And open'd on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopp'd of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, overhead,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And wither'd heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favour'd flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."—
He cross'd the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,
When on the floor he saw display'd,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusk'd trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stain'd,
That blackening streaks of blood retain'd,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the silvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and sway'd,
"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word;
"You see the guardian champion's sword:
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus, or Ascabart;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask'd his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast.

And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fall'n in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks display'd
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Show'd she was come of gentle race.
'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all inquiry light away:—
"Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.

XXXI.

Song.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking:
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting-fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

Song continued.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII.

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dream'd their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.

In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again return'd the scenes of youth,
Of confident undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view—
O were his senses false or true?
Dream'd he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seem'd to walk, and speak of love;
She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darken'd cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fix'd his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wasted around their rich perfume:
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Play'd on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
"Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturb'd repose;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;

And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
  Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
  And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-bane!

II.

Song.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
  Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
  Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
  High place in battle line,
Good hawk and hound for silvan sport,
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
  The honour'd meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

Song continued.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
  A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
  Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

"Or if on life's uncertain main
  Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
  Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
"'t come where kindred worth shall smile,
eet thee in the lonely isle."

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seem'd watching the awakening fire;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.—
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vex'd spaniel, from the beach,
Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepen'd on her cheek the rose?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not;
But when he turn'd him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made:

fter, oft the knight would say,
ıot when prize of festal day
ealt him by the brightest fair,
'er wore jewel in her hair,
hly did his bosom swell,
:hat simple mute farewell.
vith a trusty mountain-guide,
is dark stag-hounds by his side,
rts—the maid, unconscious still,
'd him wind slowly round the hill;
ıen his stately form was hid,
ıardian in her bosom chid—
Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
:hus upbraiding conscience said,—
so had Malcolm idly hung
e smooth phrase of southern tongue;
had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
er step than thine to spy.—
Allan-bane," aloud she cried,
old Minstrel by her side,—
se thee from thy moody dream!
e thy harp heroic theme,
arm thee with a noble name;
orth the glory of the Græme!"
from her lip the word had rush'd,
leep the conscious maiden blush'd;
his clan, in hall and bower,
Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

ıinstrel waked his harp—three times
the well-known martial chimes,
ırice their high heroic pride
ancholy murmurs died.
y thou bid'st, O noble maid,"
ıg his wither'd hands, he said,
y thou bid'st me wake the strain,
ı all unwont to bid in vain.
than mine a mightier hand
ıned my harp, my strings has
spann'd!
. the chords of joy, but low
ournful answer notes of woe;
ıe proud march, which victors tread,
n the wailing for the dead.
for me, if mine alone
ge's deep prophetic tone!
v tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sigh'd,
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wail'd loud through Bothwell's banner'd hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe,
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.

Soothing she answer'd him—"Assuage,
Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known,
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
At times, unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?—
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resign'd,
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me,"—she stoop'd, and, looking round,
Pluck'd a blue bare-bell from the ground,—

"For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard, is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreath'd in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrill'd to a tear, then thus replied:
"Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
O might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birth-right place,
To see my favourite's step advance,
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"*—

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,
(Light was her accent, yet she sigh'd;)
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,—
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."—

The well-known cognizance of the Douglas v.

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repress'd:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled!
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."—

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan's cell;

Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

"Thou shakest, good friend, thy tresses grey—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport, chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughter'd in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best,—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"—

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deem'd of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say?
—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
Bethink thee of the discord dread,
That kindled when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's * hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow

* The cotton-grass.

From their loud chanters * down, and sweep
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellow'd along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wail'd every harsher note away,
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear';
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of Old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The batter'd earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Express'd their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;

* The *tube* of the bagpipe.

And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarr'd;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yell'd amain;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain; but slow
Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
"Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
And near, and nearer as they row'd,
Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back agen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise agen,
"*Roderigh Vich* Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear agen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
O, that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
"Roderigh* Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

h all her joyful female band,
l Lady Margaret sought the strand.
se on the breeze their tresses flew,
. high their snowy arms they threw,
:choing back with shrill acclaim,
. chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
ile, prompt to please, with mother's
art,
darling passion of his heart,
Dame called Ellen to the strand,
greet her kinsman ere he land:
me, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
shun to wreathe a victor's brow?"—
ictantly and slow, the maid
unwelcome summoning obey'd,
, when a distant bugle rung,
ie mid-path aside she sprung:—
st, Allan-bane! From mainland cast
ar my father's signal blast.
urs," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
waft him from the mountain-side."
ı, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
darted to her shallop light,
, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven:
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely press'd,
Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that weep'd.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Mark'd she, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Mark'd Roderick landing on the isle;

* Roderick the Black, son of Alpine.

His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dash'd, with hasty hand, away
From his dimm'd eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,
"Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arch'd gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answer'd loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshall'd crowd,
Though the waned crescent own'd my might,
And in my train troop'd lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymn'd her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear;
A welcome give more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
O! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweigh'd her worth, and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
Balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.
Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy:
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow
And scarce that doe, though wing' with fear,
Outstripp'd in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As play'd the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way
And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late return'd? And why"-
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground
This youth, though still a royal ward
Risk'd life and land to be my guard

And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seem'd toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen, too; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honour'd mother:—Ellen—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
And Græme; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's silvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared;
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud *cries their blood* from Meggat's *mead,*
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless, and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of silvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turn'd their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
But from his glance it well appear'd,
'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:—
"Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er."—

XXX.

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
"So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!

Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And, when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heart might say.—
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foil'd king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till waken'd by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
'n Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
Where death seem'd combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
"Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,
"My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious spear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs,
By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
O seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Roderick from the Douglas broke--
shes flame through sable smoke,
ng its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
e broad blaze of ruddy glow,
: deep anguish of despair
in fierce jealousy, to air.
stalwart grasp his hand he laid
alcolm's breast and belted plaid :
:, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
:, minion! hold'st thou thus at
nought
sson I so lately taught?
oof, the Douglas, and that maid,
thou for punishment delay'd."
as greyhound on his game,
ly with Roderick grappled Græme.
h my name, if aught afford
ieftain safety save his sword!"
s they strove, their desperate hand
. to the dagger or the brand,
eath had been—but Douglas rose,
rust between the struggling foes;
nt strength :—"Chieftains, fore-
go!
the first who strikes, my foe.—
en, forbear your frantic jar!
is the Douglas fall'n so far,
ughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
h dishonourable broil!"
and slowly, they unclasp,
ick with shame, their desperate
grasp,
ich upon his rival glared,
ot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

: the brands aloft were flung,
et on Roderick's mantle hung,
alcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
er'd through terrific dream.
Roderick plunged in sheath his
sword,
il'd his wrath in scornful word :
safe till morning; pity 'twere
eek should feel the midnight air!
nayest thou to James Stuart tell,
ck will keep the lake and fell,
key, *with his freeborn* clan,
reant pomp of earthly man.
ould he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes
show.—
Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came;
"Give our safe-conduct to the Græme."
Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and bold,
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot, an angel deign'd to grace,
Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back,
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
So secret, but we meet agen.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"—
He said, and left the silvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand,
(Such was the Douglas's command,)
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword
roll'd,
His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
"O! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the chieftain of his name

Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side."
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the shore;
And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

The Gathering.

I.

Time rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yell'd the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

II.

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
e doe awoke, and to the lawn,
mm'd with dewdrops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.

a rock, his vassals' care
mpt the ritual to prepare,
p and deathful meaning fraught;
Antiquity had taught
face meet, ere yet abroad
ss of Fire should take its road.
nking band stood oft aghast
npatient glance he cast;—
nce the mountain eagle threw,
the cliffs of Benvenue,
ad her dark sails on the wind,
h in middle heaven reclined,
broad shadow on the lake,
the warblers of the brake.

IV.

of wither'd boughs was piled,
er and rowan wild,
with shivers from the oak,
the lightning's recent stroke.
e Hermit, by it stood,
ed, in his frock and hood.
ed beard and matted hair
l a visage of despair;
d arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
s of frantic penance bore.
nk, of savage form and face,
ending danger of his race
wn from deepest solitude,
enharrow's bosom rude.
he mien of Christian priest,
d's, from the grave released,
harden'd heart and eye might
ook
n sacrifice to look;
ch, 'twas said, of heathen lore
the charms he mutter'd o'er.
ow'd creed gave only worse
dlier emphasis of curse;
nt sought that Hermit's prayer,
the pilgrim shunn'd with care,
r huntsman knew his bound,
nid chase call'd off his hound;
lonely glen or strath,
rt-dweller met his path,
d, and sign'd the cross between,
rror took devotion's mien.

V.

's birth strange tales were told.
er watch'd a midnight fold,
within a dreary glen,
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreath'd with chaplet, flush'd and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade:
—She said, no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear;
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite,
But lock'd her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfess'd.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasp'd the sable-letter'd page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,

And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'er-strung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise;
The mountain mist took form and limb,
Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared;—and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
ader crosslet form'd with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke:

IX.

"Woe to the clansman, who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath and woe."
He paused;—the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;
And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his muster'd force,
Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,
"Woe to the traitor, woe!"
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hush'd on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his mutter'd spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reach'd the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
"Woe to the wretch, who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,

A kindred fate shall know ;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe."
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammer'd slow ;
Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red !
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head,
We doom to want and woe !"
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave !
And the grey pass where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summon'd to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobey'd.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard :
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed !
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed !
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize !
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth !
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark !
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside !"
He ceased ; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took :
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed !"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew ;
High stood the henchman on the prow,
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launch'd the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near'd the mainland hill ;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest ;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass ;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound ;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap :
Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now ;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career !
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race ;
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed !

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise ;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down.

Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe;
The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,
The falc'ner toss'd his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half-seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayst thou rest, thy labour done,
Their Lord shall speed the signal on.—
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.
—What woeful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!
The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,*
Sage counsel in cumber
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain
Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah,† who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood;
Held forth the Cross besmear'd with blood;
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;

* Or *corri*, the hollow side of the hill, where game usually lies.
† *Faithful*, the name of a dog.

hen he saw his mother's eye
ı him in speechless agony,
to her open'd arms he flew,
d on her lips a fond adieu—
!" she sobb'd,—"and yet be gone,
speed thee forth, like Duncan's
son!"
ook he cast upon the bier,
d from his eye the gathering tear,
ıed deep to clear his labouring
breast,
oss'd aloft his bonnet crest,
like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
ıe essays his fire and speed,
nish'd, and o'er moor and moss
forward with the Fiery Cross.
nded was the widow's tear,
yet his footsteps she could hear;
hen she mark'd the henchman's eye
vith unwonted sympathy,
man," she said, "his race is run,
should have sped thine errand on;
ak has fall'n,— the sapling bough
Duncraggan's shelter now.
ust I well, his duty done,
rphan's God will guard my son.—
ou, in many a danger true,
ıncan's hest your blades that drew,
ns, and guard that orphan's head!
ıbes and women wail the dead."
weapon-clang, and martial call,
nded through the funeral hall,
from the walls the attendant band
ı'd sword and targe, with hurried
hand;
hort and flitting energy
ed from the mourner's sunken eye,
the sounds to warrior dear
rouse her Duncan from his bier.
ded soon that borrow'd force;
claim'd his right, and tears their
course.

XIX.

li saw the Cross of Fire,
ıced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
ale and hill the summons flew,
est nor pause young Angus knew;
ar that gather'd in his eye
t the mountain-breeze to dry;
where Teith's young waters roll,
him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
He dash'd amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice—the foam splash'd
high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
And up the chapel pathway strain'd.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
Had sought the chapel of St Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear:
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the 'kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,

The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just link'd to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
—What in the racer's bosom stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve, and feeling strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

Song.

The heath this night must be my bed,
*The bracken * curtain for my head,*
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil,
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,

* *Bracken*, fern.

Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Survey'd the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seem'd at peace.—Now wot ye why
The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scann'd with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequester'd dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had staid full many a rock,
Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frown'd incumbent o'er the spot,
And form'd the rugged silvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern grey.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Grey Superstition's whisper dread
Debarr'd the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their silvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick, with a chosen few,
Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;
The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighbouring height,
By the low-levell'd sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,

Hard by where turn'd apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But hark! what mingles in the strain?
It is the harp of Allan-bane,
That wakes its measure slow and high,
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings?
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX.

Hymn to the Virgin.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banish'd, outcast, and reviled—
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!
The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
Mother, list a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As list'ning still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
"It is the last time—'tis the last,"
He mutter'd thrice,—"the last time e'er
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick heigh
Where muster'd, in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly stray'd;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was match'd the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times return'd the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claim'd her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Prophecy.

I.

"THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears:
The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!"—
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripp'd the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
"Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
Art thou return'd from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."—
(For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.)
"Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.
"Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
And stirr'd him with his slacken'd bow—
"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
"What of the foemen?" Norman said.—
"Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command, to march from Doune;
King James, the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
"What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

IV.

"'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?"—
"It is, because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

MALISE.

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew
The choicest of the prey we had,

When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glow'd like fiery spark ;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row,
A child might scatheless stroke his brow."—

V.

NORMAN.

"That bull was slain : his reeking hide
They stretch'd the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe:
Couch'd on a shelve beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief ;—but hush !
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host ?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,*
His morsel claims with sullen croak ?"

MALISE.

—"Peace ! peace ! to other than to me,
Thy words were evil augury ;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
Together they descend the brow."

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word :—

* *Quartered.*

"Roderick ! it is a fearful strife,
For man endow'd with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne !—
The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
A human tongue may ne'er avouch ;
No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came,
In characters of living flame !
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul ;—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE."—

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care :
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow :
A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eve shall witness his return !
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south ;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him down.
—But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise ! what tidings of the foe ?"—

VIII.

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And mark'd the sable pale of Mar."—

Alpine's soul, high tidings those !
to hear of worthy foes.
move they on ?"—"To-morrow's
noon
ee them here for battle boune."—*
ı shall it see a meeting stern !—
ır the place—say, couldst thou learn
ıt of the friendly clans of Earn ?
:hened by them, we well might bide
attle on Benledi's side.
:ouldst not ?—well ! Clan-Alpine's
men
man the Trosachs' shaggy glen ;
n Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
our maids' and matrons' sight,
for his hearth and household fire,
r for child, and son for sire,—
for maid beloved !—But why—
ıe breeze affects mine eye ?
ıt thou come, ill-omen'd tear !
ısenger of doubt or fear ?
ıooner may the Saxon lance
Benledi from his stance,
doubt or terror can pierce through
nyielding heart of Roderick Dhu !
ubborn as his trusty targe.—
o his post—all know their charge."
ibroch sounds, the bands advance,
broadswords gleam, the banners
dance,
ent to the Chieftain's glance.
rn me from the martial roar,
eek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

e is the Douglas ?—he is gone ;
Ellen sits on the grey stone
y the cave, and makes her moan ;
vainly Allan's words of cheer
our'd on her unheeding ear.—
will return—Dear lady, trust !—
joy return ;—he will—he must.
was it time to seek, afar,
refuge from impending war,
e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
ow'd by the approaching storm.
their boats with many a light,
ng the livelong yesternight,
ıg like flashes darted forth
e red streamers of the north ;

Boune or *bown*—ready, prepared.

I mark'd at morn how close they ride,
Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare ?"—

X.

ELLEN.

"No, Allan, no ! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glisten'd in his eye
Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his ; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden, when the theme
Turn'd, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen
aught ?
Oh no ! 'twas apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
(Let me be just) that friend so true ;
In danger both, and in our cause !
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
'If not on earth, we meet in heaven !'
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie, and make me known ?
Alas ! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friend's safety with his own ;—
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"—

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen !—dearest, nay !
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe ; and for the Græme,—
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name !—

My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow,
That presaged this approaching woe!
Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."—

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear."
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

Ballad.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis * and merle † are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech,
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away."—

* *Thrush.* † *Blackbird.*

"O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

XIII.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwoo
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brow side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who wonn'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd churc
His voice was ghostly shrill.

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech a oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

"Lay on him the curse of the wither heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life wou part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good gree wood,
Though the birds have still'd th singing;

ning blaze doth Alice raise,
Richard is fagots bringing.

an starts, that hideous dwarf,
: Lord Richard stands,
he cross'd and bless'd himself,
not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
t is made with bloody hands."

then spoke she, Alice Brand,
woman void of fear,—
' there's blood upon his hand,
ut the blood of deer."—

loud thou liest, thou bold of
ıood!
ıves unto his hand,
n of thine own kindly blood,
lood of Ethert Brand."

rward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
nade the holy sign,—
there's blood on Richard's hand,
tless hand is mine.

conjure thee, Demon elf,
im whom Demons fear,
' us whence thou art thyself,
vhat thine errand here?"

XV.

Ballad continued.

ıerry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land,
fairy birds are singing,
the court doth ride by their
ıonarch's side,
bit and bridle ringing:

ıily shines the Fairy-land—
l is glistening show,
idle gleam that December's beam
art on ice and snow.

.ding, like that varied gleam,
inconstant shape,
w like knight and lady seem,
ıow like dwarf and ape.

between the night and day,
the Fairy King has power,
unk down in a sinful fray,
ixt *life and death*, was snatch'd
vay
joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine."

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him
twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline
grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
A stranger climb'd the steepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-
James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a
scream:
"O stranger! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here?"—
"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
The happy path of my return."—
"The happy path!—what! said he
nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith!
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—
"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure!—
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him to guide thee here."

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weigh'd with
death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower"—
"O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!—
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first—my father is a man
Outlaw'd and exil'd, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
Still would'st thou speak?—then hear
the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou has the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony,
As death had seal'd her Malcolm's doom,
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffer'd to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.—
"O! little know'st thou Roderick's heart
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had cross'd h
brain,
He paus'd, and turn'd, and came agai

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
It chanced in fight that my poor swor
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign
Seek thou the king without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then w
gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He join'd his guide, and wending do
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their wa
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whoop'd loud a
high—
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?

He stammer'd forth—"I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed :—"Ah ! gallant grey !
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently ;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die !"
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo ! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreath'd with gaudy broom ;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing ;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shriek'd till all the rocks replied ;
As loud she laugh'd when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew ;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung—
She sung !—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime ;
And now, though strain'd and roughen'd, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warp'd and wrung—
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day !

'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair ;
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drown'd in blood the morning smile !
And woe betide the fairy dream !
I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

"Who is this maid ? what means her lay ?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."
"'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,
"A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick foray'd Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquer'd blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
Hence, brain-sick fool !"—He raised his bow :—
"Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitch'd a bar !"—
"Thanks, champion, thanks !" the Maniac cried,
And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
"See the grey pennons I prepare,
To seek my true-love through the air !
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume !
No !—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."—

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—
"O ! thou look'st kindly, and I will.—
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green ;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tong

"For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trill'd the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise, and guessest well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fix'd her apprehensive eye;
Then turn'd it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly."

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrill'd in Blanche's faded breast,—
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laugh'd;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.
"This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm'd its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—

* *Having ten branches on his antlers.*

ıtill.—O God ! more bright
n beam her parting light !—
y knighthood's honour'd sign,
hy life preserved by mine,
ɔu shalt see a darksome man,
sts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
ans broad and shadowy plume,
l of blood, and brow of gloom,
:art bold, thy weapon strong,
ak poor Blanche of Devan's
ong !—
ch for thee by pass and fell . . .
e path . . . O God ! . . . fare-
ıll."

XXVIII.

heart had brave Fitz-James ;
'd his eyes at pity's claims,
, with mingled grief and ire,
ıe murder'd maid expire.
my need, be my relief,
.k this on yonder Chief ! "
ɔm Blanche's tresses fair
:d with her bridegroom's hair;
led braid in blood he dyed,
:d it on his bonnet-side :
whose word is truth ! I swear,
favour will I wear,
ad token I imbrue
t blood of Roderick Dhu !
c! what means yon faint halloo?
: is up,—but they shall know,
ıt bay's a dangerous foe."
n the known but guarded way,
copse and cliffs Fitz-James
st stray,
ust change his desperate track,
and precipice turn'd back.
fatigued, and faint, at length,
: of food and loss of strength,
d him in a thicket hoar,
ght his toils and perils o'er :—
y rash adventures past,
ic feat must prove the last !
so mad but might have guess'd,
ıis Highland hornet's nest
ıster up in swarms so soon
:y heard of bands at Doune ?—
dhounds now they search me
—
ıe *whistle and* the shout !—

If further through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe :
I'll couch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell ;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake ;
And not the summer solstice, there,
Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze, that swept the wold,
Benumb'd his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famish'd and chill'd, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journey'd on ;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer ;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
"Thy name and purpose ! Saxon, stand ! "
"A stranger." "What dost thou require ? "—
"Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chill'd my limbs with frost."
"Art thou a friend to Roderick ?" "No."
"Thou darest not call thyself a foe ?"
"I dare ! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."
"Bold words !—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain ?
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
Who say thou camest a secret spy !"

"They do, by heaven!—Come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."
"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."
"Then by these tokens may'st thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
"Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The harden'd flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech address'd:—
"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honour spoke,
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honour's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.'
"I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gather'd heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Combat.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewilder'd pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain side;—
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael * around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path!—they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,

* The Scottish Highlander calls himself *Gael*, or Gaul, and terms the Lowlanders Sassenach or Saxons.

nding the rich scenes beneath,
ıdings of the Forth and Teith,
the vales between that lie,
·ling's turrets melt in sky;
ınk in copse, their farthest glance
ot the length of horseman's lance.
ft so steep, the foot was fain
ce from the hand to gain;
led oft, that, bursting through,
awthorn shed her showers of
ew,—
ımond dew, so pure and clear,
all but Beauty's tear!

III.

th they came where, stern and
teep,
sinks down upon the deep.
ennachar in silver flows,
·idge on ridge, Benledi rose;
hollow path twined on,
steep bank and threatening
tone;
lred men might hold the post
rdihood against a host.
ged mountain's scanty cloak
arfish shrubs of birch and oak,
ingles bare, and cliffs between,
ches bright of bracken green,
ıther black, that waved so high,
he copse in rivalry.
re the lake slept deep and still,
iers fringed the swamp and hill;
both path and hill were torn,
vintry torrents down had borne,
p'd upon the cumber'd land
k of gravel, rocks, and sand.
ome was the road to trace,
le, abating of his pace,
vly through the pass's jaws,
'd Fitz-James, by what strange
ause
ht these wilds? traversed by few,
a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
ı my belt, and by my side;
th to tell," the Saxon said,
nt *not now to claim* its aid.
re, but three days since, I came,
d in pursuit of game,
All seem'd as peaceful and as still,
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied."
"Yet why a second venture try?"
"A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
Moves our free course by such fix'd cause,
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound stray'd,
The merry glance of mountain maid:
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone."—

V.

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, rais'd by Mar?"
—"No, by my word;—of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful
hung."—
"Free be they flung! for we were loth
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewilder'd in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boast by which you
show
Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal foe?"—
"Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scow

A space he paused, then sternly said,
"And heard'st thou why he drew his blade?
Heard'st thou, that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."—
"Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command,
The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
His herds and harvest rear'd in vain.—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now! See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fatten'd steer or household bread;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—"And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"—
"As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."—
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

IX.

"Have, then, thy wish!"—He whistled shrill,
And he was answer'd from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,

And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied,
"Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."
They moved:—I said Fitz-James was brave,
As ever knight that belted glaive;
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonour'd and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
And still, from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shor

Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said—
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand:
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead;
'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.'"
"Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.

Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;

less expert, though stronger far,
ael maintain'd unequal war.
times in closing strife they stood,
rice the Saxon blade drank blood;
ıted draught, no scanty tide,
ıshing flood the tartans dyed.
Roderick felt the fatal drain,
ıower'd his blows like wintry rain;
ıs firm rock, or castle-roof,
t the winter shower is proof,
e, invulnerable still,
his wild rage by steady skill;
: advantage ta'en, his brand
. Roderick's weapon from his hand,
ıckward borne upon the lea,
ıt the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

yield thee, or by Him who made
orld, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"—
threats, thy mercy, I defy!
reant yield, who fears to die."
adder darting from his coil,
olf that dashes through the toil,
mountain-cat who guards her young,
Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
'd, but reck'd not of a wound,
:k'd his arms his foeman round.—
gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
.den's hand is round thee thrown!
esperate grasp thy frame might feel,
h bars of brass and triple steel!—
:ug, they strain! down, down they go,
ıel above, Fitz-James below.
hieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
ee was planted on his breast;
tted locks he backward threw,
his brow his hand he drew,
ıood and mist to clear his sight,
leam'd aloft his dagger bright!—
ıate and fury ill supplied
eam of life's exhausted tide,
! too late the advantage came,
the odds of deadly game;
ile the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeem'd, unhoped, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appear'd his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,—
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid:
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valour give."
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
—"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be boune,
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

"Stand, Bayard, stand!"—the steed obey'd,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.

No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreath'd his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turn'd on the horse his armed heel,
And stirr'd his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.
They dash'd that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
His merry-men follow'd as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain'd,
Sudden his steed the leader rein'd;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
"Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,
Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain-side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"
"No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace."—
"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banish'd Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared."
Then right-hand wheel'd their steeds, and straight
They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
"Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late:
The abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of heaven;—
—Be pardon'd one repining tear!
For He, who gave her, knows how dear,
How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.
—Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
—But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,

: the good yeoman bends his bow,
ıe tough wrestler foils his foe,
ll as where, in proud career,
igh-born tilter shivers spear.
low to the Castle-park,
lay my prize;—King James shall mark
has tamed these sinews stark,
: force so oft, in happier days,
›yish wonder loved to praise."

XXI.

astle gates were open flung,
uivering draw-bridge rock'd and rung,
cho'd loud the flinty street
th the coursers' clattering feet,
wly down the steep descent
cotland's King and nobles went,
all along the crowded way
ubilee and loud huzza.
ver James was bending low,
; white jennet's saddlebow,
g his cap to city dame,
smiled and blush'd for pride and shame.
'ell the simperer might be vain,—
ose the fairest of the train.
ly he greets each city sire,
ıends each pageant's quaint attire,
to the dancers thanks aloud,
miles and nods upon the crowd,
rend the heavens with their acclaims,—
ɜ live the Commons' King, King James!"
d the King throng'd peer and knight,
ıoble dame and damsel bright,
e fiery steeds ill brook'd the stay
: steep street and crowded way.
in the train you might discern
lowering brow and visage stern;
nobles mourn'd their pride restrain'd,
he mean burgher's joys disdain'd;
hiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
each from home a banish'd man,
thought upon their own grey tower,
'aving woods, their feudal power,
And deem'd themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their chequer'd bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor call'd in vain; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppress'd;
Indignant then he turn'd him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sk

A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-hair'd sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestow'd
A purse well fill'd with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark grey man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong;
The old men mark'd and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And wink'd aside, and told each son,
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women prais'd his stately form,
Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmur rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or call'd the banish'd man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honour'd place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favourite gréyhounds should pull down,
That venison free, and Bourdeaux wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.

But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds mid-way,
And dashing on the antler'd prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
—The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darken'd brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
And brandish'd swords and staves amain,
But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doom'd of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."—
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said;
"Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:

all a Monarch's presence brook
ıus blow, and haughty look?—
ho! the Captain of our Guard!
he offender fitting ward.—
off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
eomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
k off the sports!" he said, and
frown'd,
bid our horsemen clear the
ground."

XXVII.

uproar wild and misarray
l the fair form of festal day.
ɔrsemen prick'd among the crowd,
'd by threats and insult loud;
th are borne the old and weak,
morous fly, the women shriek;
lint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
ardier urge tumultuous war.
ɔe round Douglas darkly sweep
ɔyal spears in circle deep,
lowly scale the pathway steep;
on the rear in thunder pour
ıbble with disorder'd roar.
grief the noble Douglas saw
ommons rise against the law,
ɔ the leading soldier said,—
ɔhn of Hyndford! 'twas my blade,
cnighthood on thy shoulder laid;
ıat good deed, permit me then
'd with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

r, gentle friends! ere yet for me,
ɜak the bands of fealty.
e, my honour, and my cause,
er free to Scotland's laws.
ıese so weak as must require
id of your misguided ire?
I suffer causeless strong,
ı my selfish rage so strong,
nse of public weal so low,
for mean vengeance on a foe,
cords of love I should unbind,
ı knit my country and my kind?
! Believe, in yonder tower
not soothe my captive hour,
ow those spears our foes should
dread,
e *in kindred gore* are red;
w, in fruitless brawl begun,
that mother wails her son;
For me, that widow's mate expires;
For me, that orphans weep their sires;
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they pray'd
For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bless'd him who stay'd the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resign'd his honour'd charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his
train.
"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common
fool?
Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim,
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strain'd for King James their morning
note;
With like acclaim they hail'd the day,
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?"—
"He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summon'd his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand array'd.
The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
To break their muster march'd, and soon
Your grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier look'd to this:
I lost it in this bustling day.
—Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war:
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight;
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel
Bear Mar our message, Braco; fly!"—
He turn'd his steed,—"My liege, I hie,—
Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James' mood that day,
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly throng
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the sadden'd town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms:—the Douglas too,
They mourn'd him pent within the hold
"Where stout Earl William was of old."
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen, from the west,
At evening to the Castle press'd;
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Guard-Room.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and, O! what scenes of woe,
Are witness'd by that red and struggling beam!
The fever'd patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream;
The ruin'd maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blacken'd stone,
And show'd wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deform'd with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fever'd with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drain'd, and cups o'er-thrown,
Show'd in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labour'd still their thirst to quench;
Some, chill'd with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor own'd the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
Their rolls show'd French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-conceal'd disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well train'd to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontroll'd;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up-started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees* out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge, heard without,
Staid in mid-roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went,—
"Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And,—beat for jubilee the drum!
A maid and minstrel with him come."
Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
"What news?" they roar'd:—"I only know,
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast."—
"But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."—

* *Bacchanalian interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.*

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm."—
"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
And dropp'd at once the tartan screen:—
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;

hardy Brent, abash'd and tamed,
half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

' she spoke,—"Soldiers, attend!
:her was the soldier's friend;
d him in camps, in marches led,
vith him in the battle bled.
om the valiant, or the strong,
l exile's daughter suffer wrong."—
:r'd De Brent, most forward still
ry feat or good or ill,—
ame me of the part I play'd:
ıou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
tlaw I by forest laws,
ıerry Needwood knows the cause.
Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—
ped his iron eye and brow,—
t bear such age, I think, as thou.
'e, my mates;—I go to call
aptain of our watch to hall:
lies my halberd on the floor;
e that steps my halberd o'er,
the maid injurious part,
ıft shall quiver in his heart!—
e loose speech, or jesting rough:
know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.

Captain came, a gallant young,—
ıllibardine's house he sprung,)
ore he yet the spurs of knight;
as his mien, his humour light,
hough by courtesy controll'd,
rd his speech, his bearing bold.
gh-born maiden ill could brook
anning of his curious look
auntless eye;—and yet, in sooth,
Lewis was a generous youth;
len's lovely face and mien,
ed to the garb and scene,
lightly bear construction strange,
ive loose fancy scope to range.
:ome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
ye to seek a champion's aid,
frey white, with harper hoar,
rrant damosel of yore?
hy high quest a knight require,
y the venture suit a squire?"—
ırk eye flash'd;—she paused and
sigh'd,—
at have I to do with pride!—
—Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and alter'd look;
And said,—"This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veil'd,
Lady, in aught my folly fail'd.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way."
But, ere she follow'd, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffer'd gold;—
"Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar."
With thanks,—'twas all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
"My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.

With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse,—
A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right—deny it not!"—
"Little we reck," said John of Brent,
"We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artist form'd, who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd:—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou may'st remain
'he Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O! how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
—"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all?
Have they been ruin'd in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear."—
(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)
"Who fought—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?"
"O, calm thee, Chief!" the Minstrel cried,
"Ellen is safe;"—"For that thank Heaven!"—
"And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
The Lady Margaret too is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told,
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent."

XIV.

hieftain rear'd his form on high,
:ver's fire was in his eye;
ıastly, pale, and livid streaks
er'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
ırk, Minstrel! I have heard thee
play,
ıeasure bold, on festal day,
. lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
ıarper play, or warrior hear! . . .
tirring air that peals on high,
)ermid's race our victory.—
it!—and then, (for well thou canst,)
rom thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
me the picture of the fight,
met my clan the Saxon might.
ten, till my fancy hears
ang of swords, the crash of spears!
grates, these walls, shall vanish
then,
.e fair field of fighting men,
ıy free spirit burst away,
it soar'd from battle fray."
'embling Bard with awe obey'd,—
ɔn the harp his hand he laid;
ıon remembrance of the sight
tness'd from the mountain's height,
what old Bertram told at night,
en'd the full power of song,
ıore him in career along;—
ıllop launch'd on river's tide,
ɜlow and fearful leaves the side,
vhen it feels the middle stream,
ɜ downward swift as lightning's
beam.

XV.

Battle of Beal' an Duine.

Minstrel came once more to view
astern ridge of Benvenue,
re he parted, he would say
vell to lovely Loch Achray—
e shall he find, in foreign land,
ıe a lake, so sweet a strand!—
ɜre is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,
on her eyry nods the erne,
he deer has sought the brake;
small birds will not sing aloud,
ıe springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?
—I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI.

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near
Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frown'd,
Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests
to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirr'd the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,

As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their plight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!'—
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel* cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'—

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurl'd them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
—'My banner-man, advance!
I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.—
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!'—
The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd;
Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass:
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,

* *A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which they made desperate efforts to break through* [illegible].

not in mingled tide ;
laided warriors of the North
on the mountain thunder forth
l overhang its side ;
by the lake below appears
ark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.
ary bay each shatter'd band,
z their foemen, sternly stand ;
banners stream like tatter'd sail,
lings its fragments to the gale,
roken arms and disarray
d the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

ıg the mountain's ridge askance,
on stood in sullen trance,
ay pointed with his lance,
l cried—'Behold yon isle !—
ne are left to guard its strand,
nen weak, that wring the hand :
e of yore the robber band
ir booty wont to pile ;—
e, with bonnet-pieces store,
will swim a bow-shot o'er,
se a shallop from the shore.
we'll tame the war-wolf then,
f his mate, and brood, and den.'
om the ranks a spearman sprung,
h his casque and corslet rung,
plunged him in the wave :—
the deed—the purpose knew,
their clamours Benvenue
ningled echo gave ;
cons shout, their mate to cheer,
pless females scream for fear,
ls for rage the mountaineer.
hen, as by the outcry riven,
lown at once the lowering heaven ;
windswept Loch Katrine's breast,
lows rear'd their snowy crest.
r the swimmer swell'd they high,
the Highland marksman's eye ;
nd him shower'd, 'mid rain and
ıail,
ıgeful arrows of the Gael.—
—He nears the isle—and lo !
ıd is on a shallop's bow.
hen a flash of lightning came,
d the waves and strand with
lame ;—
Duncraggan's widow'd dame,
n oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand :—
It darken'd,—but amid the moan
Of waves, I heard a dying groan ;—
Another flash !—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

" 'Revenge ! revenge !' the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage ;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
An herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold."
—But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand !—
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy :
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time ;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song ;
At length, no more his deafen'd ear
The minstrel melody can hear ;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench'd,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd ;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fix'd on vacancy ;
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu !—
Old Allan-bane look'd on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit pass'd ;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

" And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foemen's dread, thy people's ai

Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
For thee shall none a requiem say?—
For thee,—who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.—
O woe for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine."—

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd, with many-colour'd gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawn'd the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Graeme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betray'd.—
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.
I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.
No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The list'ner had not turn'd her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turn'd the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain

lcome, brave Fitz-James!" she
said;
may an almost orphan maid
deep debt"——"O say not so!
no gratitude you owe.
ne, alas! the boon to give,
d thy noble father live;
ut be thy guide, sweet maid,
cotland's King thy suit to aid.
ant he, though ire and pride
y his better mood aside.
Ellen, come! 'tis more than time,
ds his court at morning prime."
eating heart, and bosom wrung,
brother's arm she clung.
he dried the falling tear,
ntly whisper'd hope and cheer;
tering steps half led, half staid,
h gallery fair and high arcade,
his touch, its wings of pride
al arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

'twas brilliant all and light,
nging scene of figures bright;
'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
en the setting sun has given
ousand hues to summer even,
om their tissue, fancy frames
knights and fairy dames.
Fitz-James her footing staid;
faint steps she forward made,
low her drooping head she raised,
arful round the presence gazed;
n she sought, who own'd this state,
eaded Prince whose will was fate!—
zed on many a princely port,
well have ruled a royal court;
ny a splendid garb she gazed,—
urn'd bewilder'd and amazed,
stood bare; and, in the room,
mes alone wore cap and plume.
each lady's look was lent;
each courtier's eye was bent;
furs and silks and jewels sheen,
od, in simple Lincoln green,
ntre of the glittering ring,—
nowdoun's Knight is Scotland's
King.

XXVII.

ith of snow, on mountain-breast,
om the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She show'd the ring—she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
"Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven:
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepp'd between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
—Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,

'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-
James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft,
drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy monarch's life to mountain glaive!"—
Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deem'd the monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit:—the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings,
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his
brand:—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wish'd her sire to speak
The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force
And stubborn justice holds her course.—
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the
word,
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's
Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile
And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"—
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
  On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
  The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
  And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
  With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp!
  Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
  May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
  Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawn'd wearier day,
  And bitterer was the grief devour'd alone.
That I o'erlived such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
  Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
  'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
  Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
  A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTES TO THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

Page 16. *The feast was over in Branksome tower.*

In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Brankholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick. He was probably induced to this transaction from the vicinity of Branksome to the extensive domain which he possessed in Ettrick Forest and in Teviotdale. In the former district he held by occupancy the estate of Buccleuch, and much of the forest land on the river Ettrick. In Teviotdale, he enjoyed the barony of Eckford, by a grant from Robert II. to his ancestor, Walter Scott of Kirkurd, for the apprehending of Gilbert Ridderford, confirmed by Robert III. 3d May 1424. Tradition imputes the exchange betwixt Scott and Inglis to a conversation, in which the latter —a man, it would appear, of a mild and forbearing nature—complained much of the injuries to which he was exposed from the English Borderers, who frequently plundered his lands of Branksome. Sir William Scott instantly offered him the estate of Murdiestone, in exchange for that which was subject to such egregious inconvenience. When the bargain was completed, he dryly remarked that the cattle in Cumberland were as good as those of Teviotdale; and proceeded to commence a system of reprisals upon the English, which was regularly pursued by his successors. In the next reign, James II. granted to Sir Walter Scott of Branksome, and to Sir David, his son, the remaining half of the barony of Branksome, to be held in blanche for the payment of a red rose. The cause assigned for the grant is, their brave and faithful exertions in favour of the King against the house of Douglas, with whom James had been recently tugging for the throne of Scotland. This charter is dated the 2d February 1443; and, in the same month, part of the barony of Langholm, and many lands in Lanarkshire, were conferred upon Sir Walter and his son by the same monarch.

16. *Nine-and-twenty knights of fame*
Hung their shields in Branksome-hall.

The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, retained in their household, at Branksome, a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief, for the military service of watching and warding his castle.

17. "—— *with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow.*"

"Of a truth," says Froissart, "the Scottish cannot boast great skill with the bow, but rather bear axes, with which, in time of need, they give heavy strokes." The Jedwood-axe was a sort of partisan, used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh, which bear a cavalier mounted, and armed with this weapon. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff.

17. *They watch, against Southern force and guile,*
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

17. *Bards long shall tell,*
How Lord Walter fell.

Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. He was a brave and powerful baron, and Warden of the West Marches of Scotland. His death was the consequence of a feud betwixt the Scotts and Kerrs.

17. *While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,*
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott.

Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, was a bond executed in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. But either this indenture never took effect, or else the feud was renewed shortly afterwards. The name of Ker is variously spelt Ker, Kerr, or Carr.

18. *He learn'd the art that none may name,*
In Padua, far beyond the sea.

Padua was long supposed, by the Scottish peasants, to be the principal school of necromancy.

18. *His form no darkening shadow traced*
Upon the sunny wall!

The shadow of a necromancer was independent of the sun. Glycas informs us that Simon Magus caused his shadow to go before him, making people believe it was an attendant spirit.

19. *By wily turns, by desperate bounds,*
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.

The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. Barbour informs us, that Robert Bruce was repeatedly tracked by sleuth-dogs. On one occasion, he escaped by wading a bow-shot down a brook, and ascending into a tree by a branch which overhung the water; thus, leaving no trace on land of his footsteps, he baffled the scent. A sure way of stopping the dog was to spill blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent. A captive was sometimes sacrificed on such occasions. Henry the Minstrel tells a romantic story of Wallace, founded on this circumstance:—The hero's little band had been joined by an Irishman, named Fawdoun, or Fadzean, a dark, savage, and suspicious character. After a sharp skirmish at Black-Erne Side, Wallace was forced to retreat with only sixteen followers, the English pursuing with a Border blood-hound. In the retreat, Fawdoun, tired, or affecting to be so, would go no further, and Wallace having in vain argued with him, in hasty anger struck off his head, and continued the retreat. When the English came up, their hound stayed upon the dead body:—

"The sleuth stopped at Fawdon, still she stood,
Nor farther would fra time she fund the blood."

20. *And sought the convent's lonely wall.*

The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by King David I. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built, though it has resisted the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought.

21. *Then view St. David's ruin'd pile.*

David I. of Scotland purchased the reputation of sanctity, by founding, and liberally endowing, not only the monastery of Melrose, but those of Kelso, Jedburgh, and many others; which led to the well-known observation of his successor, that he was *a sore saint for the crown.*

22. *O gallant Chief of Otterburne!*

The desperate battle of Otterburne was fought *August 1388, between Henry Percy,* called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions, rivals in military fame, were at the head of a chosen body of troops. The issue of the conflict is well known: Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose, beneath the high altar.

22. —— *Dark Knight of Liddesdale.*

William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II., and was so distinguished by his valour that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. But he tarnished his renown by the murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms. The King had conferred upon Ramsay the sheriffdom of Teviotdale, to which Douglas pretended some claim. In revenge of this preference, the Knight of Liddesdale came down upon Ramsay, while he was administering justice at Hawick, seized and carried him off to his remote and inaccessible castle of Hermitage, where he threw his unfortunate prisoner, horse and man, into a dungeon, leaving him to perish of hunger. So weak was the royal authority, that David, although highly incensed at this atrocious murder, found himself obliged to appoint the Knight of Liddesdale successor to his victim, as Sheriff of Teviotdale. But he was soon after slain, while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William, Earl of Douglas, in revenge, according to some authors, of Ramsay's murder; although a popular tradition, preserved in a ballad quoted by Godscroft, some parts of which are still preserved, ascribes the resentment of the Earl to jealousy.

23. —— *The wondrous Michael Scott.*

Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century, and was one of the ambassadors sent to bring the Maid of Norway to Scotland upon the death of Alexander III. By a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later era. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries. He wrote a commentary upon Aristotle, printed at Venice in 1496; and several treatises upon natural philosophy, from which he appears to have been addicted to the abstruse studies of judicial astrology, alchemy, physiognomy, and chiromancy. Hence he passed among his contemporaries for a skilful magician. Dempster informs us, that he remembers to have heard in his youth, that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the malignant fiends who were thereby invoked. Tradition varies concerning the place of his burial; some contending for Home Coltrame, in Cumberland; others for Melrose Abbey. But all agree, that his books of magic were interred in his grave, or preserved in the convent where he died.

23. *The words that cleft Eildon hills in three.*

Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or damhead, across the Tweed at Kelso; it was accomplished in one night, and still does honour to the infernal architect. Michael next ordered, that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of seasand.

26. *The Baron's Dwarf his courser held.*

The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a being called Gilpin Horner, who appeared, and made some stay, at a farm-house among the Border mountains.

28. *All was delusion, nought was truth.*

Glamour, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality. To such a charm the ballad of Johnny Fa' imputes the fascination of the lovely Countess, who eloped with that gipsy leader:—

"Sae soon as they saw her weel-far'd face,
They cast the *glamour* o'er her."

29. *The running stream dissolved the spell.*

It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance.

29. *He never counted him a man*
Would strike below the knee.

To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg, was reckoned contrary to the law of arms. In a tilt betwixt Gawain Michael, an English squire, and Joachim Cathore, a Frenchman, "they met at the speare poyntes rudely; the French squyer justed right pleasantly; the Englishman ran too lowe, for he strak the Frenchman depe into the thigh. Wherewith the Erle of Buckingham was right sore displeased, and so were all the other lords, and sayde how it was shamefully done."—*Froissart*, vol. i. chap. 366.

31. *On Penchryst glows a bale of fire.*

Bale, beacon-fagot. The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh. The *Act of Parliament* 1455, c. 48, directs, that *one bale or fagot shall* be warning of the *approach of the English* in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed;* four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.

31. *On many a cairn's grey pyramid,*
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid.

The cairns, or piles of loose stones, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the centre, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed. The author is possessed of one, discovered beneath an immense cairn at Roughlee, in Liddesdale. It is of the most barbarous construction; the middle of the substance alone having been subjected to the fire, over which, when hardened, the artist had laid an inner and outer coat of unbaked clay, etched with some very rude ornaments, his skill apparently being inadequate to baking the vase, when completely finished. The contents were bones and ashes, and a quantity of beads made of coal. This seems to have been a barbarous imitation of the Roman fashion of sepulture.

32. *Fell by the side of great Dundee.*

The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killicrankie.

32. *For pathless marsh and mountain cell,*
The peasant left his lowly shed.

The morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsmen, on the approach of an English army.—(*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i. p. 393.) Caves, hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat. Such caverns may be seen in the precipitous banks of the Teviot at Sunlaws, upon the Ale at Ancram, upon the Jed at Hundalee, and in many other places upon the Border. The banks of the Eske, at Gorton and Hawthornden, are hollowed into similar recesses.

32. *Watt Tinlinn.*

This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was, by profession, a *sutor*, but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior. Upon one occasion, the captain of Bewcastle, military governor of that wild district of Cumberland, is said to have made an incursion into Scotland, in which he was defeated and forced to fly. Watt Tinlinn pursued him closely through a dangerous morass; the captain, however, gained the firm ground; and seeing Tinlinn dismounted, and floundering in the bog, used these words of insult:—"Sutor Watt, ye cannot sew your boots: the heels *risp*, and the seams *rive*." *—"If I cannot sew," retorted Tinlinn, discharg-

* Risp, creak.—Rive, tear.

ing a shaft, which nailed the captain's thigh to his saddle,—"If I cannot sew, I can *yerk*." *

33. *His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,*
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud.

As the Borderers were indifferent about the furniture of their habitations, so much exposed to be burned and plundered, they were proportionally anxious to display splendour in decorating and ornamenting their females.—See LESLEY *de Moribus Limitaneorum.*

33. *Belted Will Howard.*

Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, succeeded to Naworth Castle, and a large domain annexed to it, in right of his wife Elizabeth, sister of George Lord Dacre, who died without heirs male, in the 11th of Queen Elizabeth. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches; and, from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions.

33. *Lord Dacre.*

The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, or Ptolemais, under Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

33. *The German hackbut-men.*

In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinky there were in the English army six hundred hackbutters on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners.

35. *Their gathering word was Bellenden.*

Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word.

37. *That he may suffer march-treason pain.*

Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was called march-treason. Among others, was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce.

37. *Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword.*

The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry. Latterly, this power was confined to generals, who were wont to create knights bannerets after or before an *engagement.*

* *Yerk, to twitch, as shoemakers do, in securing the stitches of their work.*

37. *When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford.*

The battle of Ancram Moor, or Penielheuch, was fought A.D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley.

38. *For who, in field or foray slack,*
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back!

This was the cognizance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches. The crest, or bearing, of a warrior, was often used as a *nomme de guerre.*

40. *The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,*
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name.

The chief of this potent race of heroes, about the date of the poem, was Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, a man of great courage and activity. The Bloody Heart was the well-known cognizance of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the Holy Land.

40. *The Seven Spears of Wedderburne.*

Sir David Home of Wedderburn, slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons, who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne

40. —— *Clarence's Plantagenet.*

At the battle of Beaugé, in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton of Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet The family of Swinton is one of the most ancient in Scotland, and produced many celebrated warriors.

40. *And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"*

The Earls of Home, as descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March, carried a lion rampant, argent: but, as a difference, changed the colour of the shield from gules to vert, in allusion to Greenlaw, their ancient possession. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family, was, "A Home! a Home!"

The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes. The chief of this clan was Hepburn, Lord of Hailes; a family which terminated in the too famous Earl of Bothwell.

41. *'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change*
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day.

Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, and the occasional cruelties which marked the mutual inroads, the inhabitants on either side do not appear to have regarded each other with that violent and personal animosity

which might have been expected. On the contrary, like the outposts of hostile armies, they often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in the middle of hostilities; and it is evident, from various ordinances against trade and intermarriages between English and Scottish Borderers, that the governments of both countries were jealous of their cherishing too intimate a connexion.

45. *Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,*
And with the bugle rouse the fray!

The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed. The breed of the blood-hound was kept up by the Buccleuch family on their Border estates till within the 18th century.

47. *She wrought not by forbidden spell.*

Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians and necromancers or wizards;—the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind. The arts of subjecting the demons were manifold; sometimes the fiends were actually swindled by the magicians.

47. *A merlin sat upon her wrist.*

A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was actually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron. Godscroft relates, that when Mary of Lorraine was regent, she pressed the Earl of Angus to admit a royal garrison into his castle of Tantallon. To this he returned no direct answer; but, as if apostrophizing a gos-hawk, which sat on his wrist, and which he was feeding during the Queen's speech, he exclaimed, "The devil's in this greedy glede; she will never be full."—*Hume's History of the House of Douglas*, 1743, vol. ii. p. 131. Barclay complains of the common and indecent practice of bringing hawks and hounds into churches.

47. *And princely peacock's gilded train,*
And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave.

The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely an exquisite delicacy, but a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill. When it was introduced on days of grand festival, it was the signal for the adventurous knights to take upon them vows to do some deed of chivalry, "before the peacock and the ladies."

The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendour. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colours and achievements of the baron at whose board it was served.—*Pinkerton's History*, vol. i. p. 432.

47. *Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill.*

The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border Lairds, whose names occur in history, sometimes as defending the frontier against the English, sometimes as disturbing the peace of their own country. Dickon Draw-the-sword was son to the ancient warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill, of whom it is related that he once had nine sons who accompanied him into battle.

47. —— *bit his glove.*

To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered, upon the Border, as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shakspeare, but as a pledge of mortal revenge. It is yet remembered, that a young gentleman of Teviotdale, on the morning after a hard drinking-bout, observed that he had bitten his glove. He instantly demanded of his companion, with whom had he quarrelled? And, learning that he had had words with one of the party, insisted on instant satisfaction, asserting that, though he remembered nothing of the dispute, yet he was sure he never would have bit his glove unless he had received some unpardonable insult. He fell in the duel, which was fought near Selkirk, in 1721.

48. ———— *old Albert Græme,*
The Minstrel of that ancient name.

"John Græme, second son of *Malice*, Earl of *Monteith*, commonly surnamed *John with the Bright Sword*, upon some displeasure risen against him at court, retired with many of his clan and kindred into the English Borders, in the reign of King Henry the Fourth, where they seated themselves, and many of their posterity have continued there ever since. Mr. Sandford, speaking of them, says, 'which indeed was applicable to most of the Borderers on both sides,. 'They were all stark moss-troopers, and arrant thieves: Both to England and Scotland outlawed; yet sometimes connived at, because they gave intelligence forth of Scotland, and would raise any horse at any time upon a raid of the English into Scotland. A saying is recorded of a mother to her son, 'which is now become proverbial,, *Ride, Rowley, hough's i' the pot*: that is, the last piece of beef was in the pot, and therefore it was high time for him to go and fetch more.'"—*Introduction to the History of Cumberland.*

49. *Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?*

The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time, and his sonnets display beauties which would do honour to a more polished age. He was beheaded in

Tower-hill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII., who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne.

The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the Earl in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclining upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper.

51. *Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,*
Whose monstrous circle girds the world.

The *jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda. It was very nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a hook baited with a bull's head. In the battle betwixt the evil demons and the divinities of Odin, which is to precede the *Ragnarockr*, or Twilight of the Gods, this Snake is to act a conspicuous part.

51. *Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell.*

These were the *Valcyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhalla, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader, as Gray's fatal Sisters.

51. *Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom*
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold.

The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures. Thus, Angantyr, before commencing the duel in which he was slain, stipulated, that if he fell, his sword Tyrfing should be buried with him. His daughter, Hervor, afterwards took it from his tomb. The dialogue which passed betwixt her and Angantyr's spirit on this occasion has been often translated. The whole history may be found in the Hervarar-Saga. Indeed, the ghosts of the northern warriors were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt such adventures; for they held nothing more worthy of their valour than to encounter supernatural beings.—*Bartholinus De causis contemptæ a Danis mortis*, lib. i. cap. 2, 9, 10, 13.

52. ——— *St. Bride of Douglas.*

This was a favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular, as we learn from the following passage:—"The Queen-Regent had proposed to raise a rival noble to the ducal dignity; and discoursing of her purpose with Angus, he answered, 'Why not, madam? we are happy that have such a princess, that can know and will acknowledge men's services, and is willing to recompense it; but, by the might of God,' (this was his oath when he was serious and in anger; at other times, it was by St. Bryde of Douglas,) 'if he be a Duke, I will be a Drake!'—So she desisted from prosecuting of that purpose."—*Godscroft*, vol. ii. p. 131.

NOTES TO THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

62. *——the heights of Uam-Var,*
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old.

Ua-var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly *Uaighmor*, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callander in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant. In latter times, it was the refuge of robbers and banditti, who have been only extirpated within these forty or fifty years. Strictly speaking, this stronghold is not a cave, as the name would imply, but a sort of small enclosure, or recess, surrounded with large rocks, and open above head.

62. *Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,*
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed.

"The hounds which we call Saint Hubert's hounds are commonly all blacke, yet neuertheless, the race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St Hubert haue always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with S. Eustace. Whereupon we may conceiue that (by the grace of God) all good huntsmen shall follow them into paradise."—*The noble Art of Venerie or Hunting, translated and collected for the Use of all Noblemen and Gentlemen.* Lond. 1611. 4to, p. 15.

63. *For the death-wound and death-halloo*
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew.

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar, as the old rhyme testifies—

"If thou be hurt with hart, it brings thee to thy bier,
But barber's hand will boar's hurt heal, therefore thou need'st not fear."

At all times, however, the task was dangerous, and to be adventured upon wisely and warily, either by getting behind the stag while he was gazing on the hounds, or by watching an opportunity to gallop roundly in upon him, and kill him with the sword.

64. *And now to issue from the glen,*
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far-projecting precipice.

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, excepting by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of trees.

64. *To meet with Highland plunderers here,*
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.

The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours.

66. *A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent*
Was on the vision'd future bent.

If force of evidence could authorize us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-sight. It is called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may be aptly translated visionaries. Martin, a steady believer in the second-sight, gives the following account of it:—

"The second-sight is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object without any previous means used by the person that used it for that end: the vision makes such a lively impression upon the seers, that they neither see nor think of anything else, except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial, according to the object that was represented to them.

"At the sight of a vision, the eyelids of

person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me."

"If a woman is seen standing at a man's left hand, it is a presage that she will be his wife, whether they be married to others, or unmarried at the time of the apparition.

"To see a spark of fire fall upon one's arm or breast is a forerunner of a dead child to be seen in the arms of those persons; of which there are several fresh instances."

"To see a seat empty at the time of one's sitting in it, is a presage of that person's death soon after." — *Martin's Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, 8vo, p. 300, *et seq.*

To these particulars innumerable examples might be added, all attested by grave and credible authors. But, in despite of evidence which neither Bacon, Boyle, nor Johnson were able to resist, the *Taish*, with all its visionary properties, seems to be now universally abandoned to the use of poetry. The exquisitely beautiful poem of Lochiel will at once occur to the recollection of every reader.

67. *Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,*
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut, in a strong and secluded situation. One of these last gave refuge to the unfortunate Charles Edward, in his perilous wanderings after the battle of Culloden.

67. *My sire's tall form might grace the part*
Of Ferragus or Ascabart.

These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable. The first is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was at length slain by him in single combat.

Ascapart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the History of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered. His effigies may be seen guarding one side of a gate at Southampton, while the other is occupied by Sir Bevis himself.

67. *Though all unask'd his birth and name.*

The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment. Feuds were so frequent among them, that a contrary rule would in many cases have produced the discovery of some circumstance which might have excluded the guest of the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of.

70. *Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey.*

To a late period Highland chieftains retained in their service the bard, as a family officer.

71. ——— *the Græme.*

The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which, for metrical reasons, is here spelt after the Scottish pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labours and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realized his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And, notwithstanding the severity of his temper, and the rigour with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as a third, John Græme of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death in the arms of victory may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the Nonconformists, during the reigns of Charles II. and James II.

71. *This harp, which erst Saint Modan sway'd.*

I am not prepared to show that Saint Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument, which retaining, as was natural, a portion of the sanctity attached to its master's character, announced future events by its spontaneous sound.

71. *Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,*
Were exiled from their native heaven.

The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus during the reign of James V. is the event alluded to in the text.

72. *In Holy-Rood a knight he slew.*

This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the Court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility. The murder of Sir William Stuart of Ochiltree, called *The Bloody*, by the celebrated Francis, Earl of Bothwell, may be named among many. See *Johnstoni Historia Rerum Britannicarum*, ab anno 1572 ad annum 1628. Amstelodami, 1655, fol. p. 135.

72. *The Douglas, like a stricken deer,*
Disown'd by every noble peer.

The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies

were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

72. —— *Maronnan's cell.*

The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronock, or Marnock, or Maronnan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered. There is a fountain devoted to him in the same parish; but its virtues, like the merits of its patron, have fallen into oblivion.

73. —— *Bracklinn's thundering wave.*

This is a beautiful cascade made by a mountain stream called the Keltie, at the Bridge of Bracklinn, about a mile from the village of Callander in Menteith.

73. *For Tine-man forged by fairy lore.*

Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of TINE-MAN, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought.

73. *Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow*
The footstep of a secret foe.

The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time.

74. *Those thrilling sounds that call the might*
Of Old Clan Alpine to the fight.

The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover, in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the "current of a heady fight."

74. *Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!*

Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia. This name was usually a patronymic, expressive of his descent from the founder of the family. Thus the Duke of Argyle is called MacCallum More, or the *son of Colin the Great.*

80. *And while the Fiery Cross glanced,*
like a meteor, round.

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, *upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making* a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Crean Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied, inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745-6, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours.

81. *That monk, of savage form and face.*

The state of religion in the middle ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck.

81. *Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.*

The legend which follows is not of the author's invention. It is possible he may differ from modern critics, in supposing that the records of human superstition, if peculiar to, and characteristic of, the country in which the scene is laid, are a legitimate subject of poetry. He gives, however, a ready assent to the narrower proposition which condemns all attempts of an irregular and disordered fancy to excite terror, by accumulating a train of fantastic and incoherent horrors, whether borrowed from all countries, and patched upon a narrative belonging to one which knew them not, or derived from the author's own imagination. In the present case, therefore, I appeal to the record which I have transcribed, with the variation of a very few words, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane. I know not whether it be necessary to remark, that the miscellaneous concourse of youths and maidens on the night and on the spot where the miracle is said to have taken place, might, even in a credulous age, have somewhat diminished the wonder which accompanied the conception of Gilli-Doir-Magrevollich.

"There is bot two myles from Inverloghie, the church of Kilmalee, in Lochyeld. In ancient tymes there was ane church builded upon ane hill, which was above this church, which doeth now stand in this toune; and ancient men doeth say, that there was a battell foughten on ane litle hill not the tenth part of a myle from this church, be certaine men which they did not know what they were. And long tyme thereafter, certaine herds of that toune, and of the next toune, called Unnatt, both wenches and youthes, did on a tyme conveen with others on that hill; and the day being somewhat cold, did gather the bones of the dead men that were slayne long tyme before in that place, and did make a fire to warm them. At last they did all remove from the fire, except one maid or wench, which was verie cold, and she did remaine there for a space. She being quyetlie her alone, without anie other companie, took up her cloaths above her knees, or thereby, to warm her; a wind did come and caste the ashes upon her, and she was conceived of ane man-chyld. Several tymes thereafter she was verie sick, and at last she was knowne to be with chyld. And then her parents did ask at her the matter heiroff, which the wench could not weel answer which way to satisfie them. At last she resolved them with ane answer. As fortune fell upon her concerning this marvellous miracle, the chyld being borne, his name was called *Gili-doir Maghrevollich*, that is to say, the *Black Child, Son to the Bones.* So called, his grandfather sent him to school, and so he was a good schollar and godlie. He did build this church which doeth now stand in Lochyeld, called Kilmalie." —*Macfarlane, ut supra*, ii. 188.

81. *Yet ne'er again to braid her hair*
The virgin snood did Alice wear.

The *snood*, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch, toy*, or coif, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood, nor advanced to the graver dignity of the curch. In old Scottish songs there occur many sly allusions to such misfortune; as in the old words to the popular tune of "Ower the muir amang the heather."

"Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost her silken snood
That gard her greet till she was wearie."

82. *The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream.*

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wail, approaching disaster. A superstition of the same kind is, I believe, universally received by the inferior ranks of the native Irish.

82. *Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,*
Of charging steeds careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride.

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text, is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.

83. —— *the dun deer's hide*
On fleeter foot was never tied.

The present *brogue* of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of the question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards; a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *Redshanks.*

84. *The dismal coronach.*

The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, like the *Ulalatus* of the Romans, and the *Ululoo* of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words of it were articulate, they expressed the praises of the deceased, and the loss the clan would sustain by his death.

86. *Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,*
Balquhidder, speeds the midnight blaze.

It may be necessary to inform the southern reader, that the heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set fire to, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced, in room of the tough old heather plants. This custom (execrated by sportsmen) produces occasionally the most beautiful nocturnal appearances, similar almost to the discharge of a volcano. This simile is not new to poetry. The charge of a warrior, in the fine ballad of Hardyknute, is said to be "like fire to heather set."

87. *By many a bard in Celtic tongue,*
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung.

This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch-trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil.

89. *The Taghairm called; by which, afar,*
Our sires foresaw the events of war.

The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into

futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm*, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt the desolate recesses.

90. —— *that huge cliff, whose ample verge*
Tradition calls the Herd's Targe.

There is a rock so named in the Forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course. This wild place is said in former times to have afforded refuge to an outlaw, who was supplied with provisions by a woman, who lowered them down from the brink of the precipice above. His water he procured for himself, by letting down a flagon tied to a string, into the black pool beneath the fall.

90. *Which spills the foremost foeman's life,*
That party conquers in the strife.

Though this be in the text described as a response of the Taghairm, or Oracle of the Hide, it was of itself an augury frequently attended to. The fate of the battle was often anticipated in the imagination of the combatants, by observing which party first shed blood. It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with this notion, that, on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor, they murdered a defenceless herdsman, whom they found in the fields, merely to secure an advantage of so much consequence to their party.

92. *Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,*
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?

Fairies, if not positively malevolent, are capricious, and easily offended. Like other proprietors of forests, they are peculiarly jealous of their rights of *vert* and *venison*. This jealousy was also an attribute of the northern *Duergar*, or dwarfs; to many of whose distinctions the fairies seem to have succeeded, if, indeed, they are not the same class of beings.

92. —— *who may dare on wold to wear*
The fairies' fatal green?

As the *Daoine Shi'* or Men of Peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour. Indeed, from some reason which has been, perhaps, originally a general superstition, *green* is held in Scotland to be unlucky to particular tribes and counties. The Caithness men, who hold this belief, allege as a reason, that their bands wore that colour when they were *cut off at the battle of Flodden*; and for the *same reason they* avoid crossing the Ord on a Monday, being the day of the week on which their ill-omened array set forth. Green is also disliked by those of the name of Ogilvy; but more especially is it held fatal to the whole clan of Grahame. It is remembered of an aged gentleman of that name, that when his horse fell in a fox-chase, he accounted for it at once by observing, that the whipcord attached to his lash was of this unlucky colour.

92. *For thou wert christen'd man.*

The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction. Tamlane, in the old ballad, describes his own rank in the fairy procession:—

"For I ride on a milk-white steed,
And aye nearest the town;
Because I was a christen'd knight,
They gave me that renown."

97. *Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,*
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?

St. John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford: "It was true, we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey. In a word, the law and humanity were alike; the one being more fallacious, and the other more barbarous, than in any age had been vented in such an authority."—*Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.* Oxford, 1702, fol. vol. p. 183.

98. —— *his Highland cheer,*
The harden'd flesh of mountain-deer.

The Scottish Highlanders in former times had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French whom chance made acquainted with it. The Vidame of Chartres, when a hostage in England, during the reign of Edward VI., was permitted to travel into Scotland, and penetrated as far as to the remote Highlands (*au fin fond des Sauvages*). After a great hunting party, at which a most wonderful quantity of game was destroyed, he saw these *Scottish Savages* devour a part of their venison raw, without any farther preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy; and when the Vidame partook of it, his compliance with their taste rendered him extremely popular.

100. *Not then claim'd sovereignty his due*
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command.

There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occurred the minority of

James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed.

101. ——————— *I only meant*
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy.

102. *On Bochastle the mouldering lines,*
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle-wings unfurl'd.

The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence, called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments, which have been thought Roman. There is, adjacent to Callander, a sweet villa, the residence of Captain Fairfoul, entitled the Roman Camp

102. *See, here, all vantageless I stand,*
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand.

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true, that in former combats in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly as possible in the same circumstances. But in private duel it was often otherwise.

102. *Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,*
That on the field his targe he threw.

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broad-sword against the encumbered soldier. In the civil war of 1745, most of the front rank of the clans were thus armed: and Captain Grose informs us, that, in 1747, the privates of the 42d regiment, then in Flanders, were, for the most part, permitted to carry targets.—*Military Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 164.

104. *The burghers hold their sports to-day.*

Every burgh of Scotland, of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn play, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V. was very partial to them. His ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of King of the Commons, or *Rex Plebeiorum*, as Lesley has latinized it. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow. Such a one is preserved at Selkirk and at Peebles.

105. *Robin Hood.*

The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the 6th Parliament of Queen Mary, c. 61, A.D. 1555, which ordered, under heavy penalties, that "na manner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, Abbot of Unreason, Queen of May, nor otherwise." But in 1561, the "rascal multitude," says John Knox, "were stirred up to make a Robin Hude, whilk enormity was of many years left and damned by statute and act of Parliament; yet would they not be forbidden." Accordingly, they raised a very serious tumult, and at length made prisoners the magistrates who endeavoured to suppress it, and would not release them till they extorted a formal promise that no one should be punished for his share of the disturbance. It would seem, from the complaints of the General Assembly of the Kirk, that these profane festivities were continued down to 1592.

105. *Prize of the wrestling match, the King*
To Douglas gave a golden ring.

The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring, but the animal would have embarrassed my story. Thus, in the Cokes Tale of Gamelyn, ascribed to Chaucer:

"There happed to be there beside
Tryed a wrestling:
And therefore there was y-setten
A ram and als a ring."

109. *These drew not for their fields the sword,*
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they ————

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders was of a different nature, and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior.

110. *Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!*
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band.

The jongleurs, or jugglers, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing; and therefore the Anglo-Saxon version of Saint Mark's Gospel states Herodias to have vaulted or tumbled before King Herod.

113. *That stirring air that peals on high,*
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it!

There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes, as to require to hear them on their death-bed. Such an anecdote is mentioned by the late Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, in his collection of Border tunes, respecting an air called the "Dandling of the Bairns," for which a certain Gallovidian laird is said to have evinced this strong mark of partiality. It is popularly told of a famous freebooter, that he composed the tune known by the name of Macpherson's Rant, while under sentence of death, and played it at the gallows-tree. Some spirited words have been adapted to it by Burns. A similar story is recounted of a Welsh bard, who composed and played on his death-bed the air called *Dafydd Garregg Wen.*

113. *Battle of Beal' an Duine.*

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

117. *And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King.*

This discovery will probably remind the reader of the beautiful Arabian tale of *Il Bondocani.* Yet the incident is not borrowed from that elegant story, but from Scottish tradition. James V. of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons.* For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises. The two excellent comic songs, entitled, "the Gaberlunzie man," and "We'll gae nae mair a roving," are said to have been founded upon the success of his amorous adventures when travelling in the disguise of a beggar. The latter is perhaps the best comic ballad in any language.

118. —— *Stirling's tower*
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims.

William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun. Sir David Lindsay bestows the same epithet upon it in his complaint of the Papingo:—

"Adieu, fair Snawdoun, with thy towers high,
Thy chaple-royal, park, and table round;
May, June, and July, would I dwell in thee,
Were I a man, to hear the birdis sound,
Whilk doth againe thy royal rock rebound."